DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 315 795 CS 212 245

TITLE Oregon Statewide Writing Assessment, Grade 8: Results and Analysis.
INSTITUTION Oregon State Dept. of Education, Salem.
PUB DATE Dec 89
NOTE 71p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Assessment; *Grade 8; Junior High Schools; Middle Schools; *State Surveys; Student Evaluation; Student Writing Models; *Writing Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *Oregon

ABSTRACT

This report reviews and analyzes the results of the third statewide analytical writing assessment of Oregon eighth graders. Following an introduction, the report is in five chapters: (1) The Oregon Writing Assessment Interpretive Panel: Comments and Recommendations; (2) Strengths and Weaknesses in Student Writing--A Trait-by-Trait Analysis (giving specific results from the assessment on each of the six traits--ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence structure, and conventions--together with sample papers illustrating strong and weak performance across traits); (3) Substudy Comparing 1987 and 1989; (4) Factors Affecting Student Writing; and (5) A Brief History of Writing Assessment in Oregon. Appendixes contain student directions, a guide to revision, a summary of teachers' responses from the teacher survey form, a list of the 1989 Interpretive Panel members, and a table of writing performance 1985-1989. (SR)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED315795

December 1989
Results and Analysis

# Oregon Statewide *Writing* Assessment

Grade 8

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. J. Case
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Oregon Department of Education, John W. Erickson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Salem, Oregon 97310-0290

# Results and Analysis of the 1989 Oregon Statewide Writing Assessment

Bob Burns
Associate Superintendent
Division of Curriculum and School Improvement

Wayne Neuburger
Assistant Superintendent
Assessment and Evaluation

Oregon Department of Education
700 Pringle Parkway SE
Salem, Oregon 97310-0290

**December 1989**

OS2127S

It is the policy of the State Board of Education and a priority of the Oregon Department of Education that there will be no discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, color, sex, marital status, religion, national origin, age or handicap in any educational programs, activities, or employment. Persons having questions about equal opportunity and nondiscrimination should contact the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Oregon Department of Education.

This report was prepared under the supervision of
Wayne Neuburger, Assistant Superintendent, Assessment and Evaluation,
for the Oregon Department of Education.
The Department was assisted in this project by the staff of
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory,
Portland, Oregon:

Vicki Spandel, Scoring Director and Report Author
Richard Stiggins, Project Director
Philip Nickel, Data Analysis Supervisor
Sharon Lippert, Support Staff

Produced by the
Publications and Multimedia Center
Oregon Department of Education
Salem, Oregon 97310-0290

Complimentary copies have been sent to Oregon school districts.
Additional copies are available for $3.50 each.
Place orders with the Publications Sales Clerk at 378-3589.

All or any part of this document may be photocopied for educational purposes without permission from the Oregon Department of Education.

3299319892000

# Foreword

This is the third statewide assessment based on the Essential Learning Skills adopted by the State Board of Education. Thus, these results begin to indicate a trend in student performance at the eighth grade. The performance of students has improved since 1985; however, we have not seen the improvement from 1987 to 1989 that we saw from 1985 to 1987.

The results give cause for pride as well as concern. As you will see in the following pages, some Oregon eighth grade students write extremely well and I am sure you will enjoy the writing they have shared with us. Most of the students are also able to use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. However, we are concerned that more students need to be able to produce writing that is well organized, develops clear ideas, uses good word choice and is interesting to read.

One of the goals of the writing assessment is to identify the qualities of good writing and to use the qualities as standards throughout the state. The Essential Learning Skills emphasize skills that should help all students to produce the type of writing that the better students are currently producing.

I believe we are moving in the right direction with the curriculum initiative begun under the Oregon Action Plan for Excellence. These tests results indicate that we still have work to do in preparing Oregon students for success in high school and in adult life. Most of our eighth graders are proficient in ordinary written expression. However, Oregon educators have higher goals and expectations for our students.

Through our curriculum initiatives we have sent a challenge to Oregon's teachers and students. It is incumbent on all of us to follow through with the training and support strategies that will help them meet that challenge.

Ronald D. Burge
Deputy Superintendent
Oregon Department
of Education

# Table of Contents


Page

Introduction ..... 1

Chapter 1: The Oregon Writing Assessment Interpretive Panel— Comments and Recommendations ..... 3

Chapter 2: Strengths and Weaknesses in Student Writing— A Trait-by-Trait Analysis ..... 9

- Trait 1: Ideas and Content ..... 14
- Trait 2: Organization ..... 20
- Trait 3: Voice ..... 26
- Trait 4: Word Choice ..... 33
- Trait 5: Sentence Structure ..... 40
- Trait 6: Conventions ..... 45

Chapter 3: Substudy Comparing 1987 and 1989 ..... 53

Chapter 4: Factors Affecting Student Performance ..... 55

Chapter 5: A Brief History of Writing Assessment in Oregon ..... 57

Appendices ..... 61

- A: Student Directions ..... 63
- B: Guide to Revision ..... 65
- C: Summary of Teachers' Responses from the Teacher Survey Form ..... 67
- D: 1989 Interpretive Panel Members ..... 69
- E: Writing Performance: 1985-1989 ..... 71

# Introduction

In February 1989, the Oregon Department of Education conducted a statewide assessment of eighth graders' writing skills. A representative sample of eighth graders from throughout the state—2889 students from 35 schools—participated in that assessment. On the day before the assessment was to begin, the purpose of the assessment was explained to students and they were told the topic on which they would be asked to write. Students could choose either of the following two topics:

**Topic 1**: Think about a person who has influenced your life. It should be someone you know quite well. Tell how this person has influenced your life or made a difference.

**Topic 2**: Everyone has an event in his or her life that is memorable for some reason. Think of something that happened to you that you will want to remember when you are old. Describe the event so the reader can understand why the memory is important to you.

On the day the topic was introduced, students had 10-15 minutes to do independent (non-teacher-directed) brainstorming and prewriting. Subsequently, they had up to three 30-45 minute periods to

- Write the rough draft (30-45 minutes),
- Revise the rough draft (30-45 minutes),
- Copy and proofread the final draft (30-45 minutes).

A copy of the student directions appears in Appendix A. A summary of teachers' responses (collected on a Teacher Survey form) appears in Appendix C. In addition, here are just a few of the comments offered by participating teachers:

- I'm happy to see a standardized essay-type assessment being administered. I believe this can give valid results if done properly; however, some people are not able to write well within a set time frame, so this needs to be a consideration during the assessment. This is a wonderful opportunity for the students to see what an impartial reader (grader) thinks of their work. Also, being graded by another person or persons other than their English teacher is a good experience. My students seemed interested in doing as well as possible. They took their time and worked carefully. I would like to take part in this again. It is a worthwhile endeavor. Thank you.
- I'm just completing an MA—Education, Linguistics, and Composition. I hope this assessment is one teachers will "teach to."
- Students wished for more variety of topics. Some had difficulty in writing on either choice, but most went right to work without any problems. I really like the "Guide to Revision." Students were able to focus better in proofreading and rewriting.

- I am delighted to see these assessments taking place. Just by distributing such materials as is involved, the state educates teachers. In addition, I have appreciated the material from state assessment workshops I have attended, particularly the information regarding the six writing traits scored. I think you people are doing a terrific job in assessment and in other areas as well. I would hope, specifically, that the state would be getting the word to textbook representatives about the lack of attention paid to voice in texts today. I just finished a stint on a selection committee and found this trait either ignored or barely mentioned in most 7th and 8th grade texts.

- The only complaint from some students was limiting the topic for writing. They wanted more choices.

- My students actually seemed to enjoy and feel challenged by the writing exam. They took the test seriously and worked hard to produce their best work. Their only frustration was their running out of time.

- Topic might have been more "open-ended," allowed for more creative writing.

- I do not believe this is an adequate Writing as a Process Assessment since it did not give prewriting or peer editing time.

- I would like to learn more about the analytic scoring process. Can a person find a workshop in analytic scoring offered through one of the Portland-area universities or colleges?

- I think all teachers should have a workshop on analytical scoring.

This was the third statewide analytical writing assessment for Oregon. Analytical writing assessment differs from other forms of writing assessment in that it attempts to distinguish the components of fine writing, to define each component as a part of a definitive scoring guide, and to score those components individually.

A group of language arts educators from throughout the state met after the assessment results were analyzed to help interpret the scores. Their conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 of this report gives specific results from the assessment, trait by trait, together with sample papers illustrating strong and weak performance across traits.

This report should serve to answer many of the initial questions about the assessment itself, and about the writing skills of Oregon's eighth graders. Since the 1985 Statewide Writing Assessment in Oregon, hundreds of teachers throughout the state have become acquainted with the philosophy and process of analytical assessment and there is a link between the writing skills measured through an analytic assessment and those taught in the classroom.

# Chapter 1:
# The Oregon Writing Assessment Interpretive Panel—
# Comments and Recommendations

The Oregon Writing Assessment Interpretive Panel met at the Oregon Department of Education in Salem on May 5, 1989, to review the results of the 1989 statewide writing assessment. They met for three purposes:

- To help lay and professional audiences understand the results more fully.
- To identify key issues for consideration in the future.
- To offer recommendations concerning actions that writing teachers and that the Oregon Department of Education might take to improve the instruction of writing.

During their meeting, the panel members reviewed the prompts, the methods by which scores were assigned, and summaries of students' performance relative to all traits. They considered both average performance on all traits, and the score distributions, or percentage of students who had received each possible score (1.0, 1.5, 2.0, etc.) on the five-point scoring scale. (See Appendix D for a list of Panel Members.)

**Findings**

Following are the highlights of the panel's findings.

1. The average performance of eighth grade students from 1987 to 1989 is virtually unchanged across all six traits as Table 1 illustrates:

**Table 1: Rating Means**

| Scale | 1987 | 1989 (n = 2868) |
|---|---|---|
| Ideas | 3.160 | 3.084 |
| Organization | 3.009 | 2.937 |
| Voice | 3.267 | 3.204 |
| Word Choice | 3.147 | 3.128 |
| Sentence Fluency | 3.181 | 3.191 |
| Conventions | 3.228 | 3.182 |

2. In three areas of performance—Voice, Sentence Fluency and Conventions—nearly half of the students scored 3.5 or better, indicating more strengths than weaknesses. In fact, in four of the six traits, the number of students for whom strengths outweighed weaknesses exceeded the number for whom weaknesses outweighed strengths. This is an encouraging sign, and underscores the general trend toward improved writing performance since the first analytical assessment in 1985. Though it is too early to draw final conclusions, we may be seeing the results of changing classroom practices: e.g., more time devoted to writing, and more emphasis on the teaching of writing as a process.

3. The increased length of student papers this year, together with the relatively high performance in Sentence Fluency, suggests greater fluency in students' writing which may indicate that some students, at least, are growing more comfortable with writing.

4. The pattern of performance for Word Choice, as in 1985 and 1987, continues to show a clustering of scores at the 3.0 level, with relatively fewer students showing either great strength or pronounced weakness on this trait. At the same time, however, more students in 1989 showed strengths on Word Choice than showed weaknesses, again suggesting the beginnings of a promising trend. The 3.0 score in Word Choice, which balances strengths and weaknesses, reflects the kind of language that communicates in a routine, functional way. Most students are using language that is reasonably clear and understandable. Not enough students, however, are using language to think, to clarify ideas, to enliven or enrich their description, or to explore new ways of looking at things. The answer is not more vocabulary drills, however. A more effective way to resolve this problem is to surround our students with a language-rich environment, to provide opportunities for them to hear and to read fine literature, and to respond to that literature in writing and through discussion.

5. The relatively strong performance in Conventions provides encouraging evidence that students are using punctuation, grammar, paragraphing, spelling and capitalization effectively in their writing.

6. Despite some apparent progress since 1985, scores on the trait of Organization continue to be relatively low in comparison to scores on other traits. Considering the apparent strong connection between this trait and thinking skills, we should provide more opportunities for students to develop strengths in this trait by writing in a wide range of genres, and for varied purposes and audiences. This, in turn, means providing opportunities for students to write in many areas of the curriculum, not only in writing or literature classes. On the encouraging side, we see many students taking a creative approach to organization. Few show dependence on an artificial structure, such as the five-paragraph essay. Instead, the organization in increasing numbers of papers shows a clear and deliberate connection to a strong theme, with a well-thought-out, inviting introduction; smooth and strong transitions; an identifiable climax or "high point"; and a conclusion with a clear, satisfying sense of resolution.

7. Papers which received lower scores on the traits of Ideas and Content and/or Organization often suffered from an over-abundance of trivial detail. Many recounted trips to Disneyland or other vacation adventures in which the writer strove to tell every event of the journey, whether it

enhanced the story development or not. The most successful papers tended to focus on specific incidents (e.g., catching a ball at a baseball game, eating a worm alive, flying in a plane for the first time) which stood out vividly in the writer's mind. The writer selected just those details which advanced the storyline or contributed to development of a central idea, and wove the individual element of the larger whole together in a way that brought each incident alive for the reader. Successful papers avoided lists, and shunned generalities. They were specific, rich with detail, and bright with the energy of a writer who took a general topic and made it his or her own.

8. Assessing traits individually has value because it allows us to see where relative strengths and weaknesses in students' writing lie. Instruction on the traits, however, should be given within the context of overall writing skills; in other words, individual traits (e.g., Ideas or Organization) should not be taught in isolation.

9. The large numbers of prewriting sheets and rough drafts included with this year's assessment samples indicated to readers that many student writers are making real use of the writing process, spending time thinking through and rehearsing ideas before writing, then taking time to revise after the first draft. A nonsystematic analysis of the differences between rough and final drafts indicates much evidence of real effort on the part of student writers.

10. Writing assessment is critical to guiding sound decisions about curriculum. This is so because assessment of writing taps more than writing per se; it goes below the surface to measure thinking skills, and thus provides invaluable information about students' ability to make use of what they learn both in and out of school.

**Recommendations: District, School and Teacher Levels**

1. Ensure that teacher inservice reflects an understanding of the instructional methods research says are most productive: e.g., allowing students frequent opportunities to write, giving student writers time to write and reflect and rewrite, allowing students to develop their own topics and helping them learn to do this effectively, encouraging teachers to write with students and to share their writing, encouraging collaborative learning with student writers working in groups (not only to revise writing, but to rehearse and prepare and drafts), focusing on positive responses, distinguishing between revising and editing so that revising is taught as "seeing again," making student writers—not teachers—responsible for editing, teaching editing skills in the context of extended writing and not through isolated drills, integrating writing and other language arts instruction and involving students themselves in the evaluation process.

2. Provide inservice to help teachers create the kind of school and classroom environment that fosters good written expression.

3. Ensure that the traits are known to both parents and students by introducing students to the scoring guide trait by trait, helping students develop a working vocabulary for talking about writing by using the analytical scoring guide in the classroom, using the scoring guide as a basis

for parent-teacher conferences, and making classroom criteria for good writing clearly visible (e.g., with posters).

4. Ensure that the target goals for good writing are clear in every classroom. Each teacher's expectations for writing performance should be shared openly and in writing with all students, and should be explained carefully so that they are well understood.

5. Provide models that show teachers how to work together at the building level to foster better classroom instruction and assessment. Find ways to build a stronger bridge between assessment and instruction by ensuring that any classroom assessment system is based directly on the objectives and goals that drive instruction in that classroom.

6. Encourage students to take more risks in their writing. Reward performance that reflects an individual approach or a new slant on a topic. Encourage students to share their writing with other students often so that they have an opportunity to see that there is more than one way to approach a topic, and that there is value in these differences for they enrich and expand the way we think about a subject.

7. Distinguish between revising (seeing again, reconceptualizing, reshaping or reworking the whole) and editing (proofreading and correcting). Provide teachers with more strategies for teaching both revising and editing effectively, and encourage teachers to make students responsible for revising and editing their own work.

8. Give students many opportunities to read different kinds of good writing—e.g., literature, persuasive writing, technical writing, expository prose, journalistic writing—and to respond to that writing both orally and in their own written words. In addition, give students experience every year in writing several different types of papers: e.g., narrative, expository, descriptive, persuasive, instructional, technical, analytical, journalistic. Students should not write only essays or only stories; the challenge of variety will help students develop both fluency and critical thinking skills.

9. Encourage teachers to share many samples of good writing—both students' writing and other writing—by reading the samples aloud to students and inviting their response.

10. Encourage districts to use analytical writing assessment as a form of teacher inservice, focusing on the six traits in the Department of Education's analytical scoring guide, and training teachers as raters. Teachers who participate in this training not only gain ideas for teaching writing effectively, but also learn ways of making ongoing classroom assessment of writing more effective and more fair to students.

11. The analytical scoring guide has potential as a tool for teaching content teachers who deal with the traits most closely related to thinking and reasoning skills, notably Ideas and Content, Organization and Voice (in the sense of audience awareness)

12. Beware of setting expectations too low. Students can write. The potential has been demonstrated repeatedly, and we must provide increased opportunities for students to build upon the skills they already have.

13. One of the primary values in the scoring guide is that it encourages all teachers who use it to look at writing in the same way—to be consistent about what they value. We can build on this strength by encouraging teachers to work together at the building level, scoring papers, forming support groups, and discussing what they value in writing. In addition, we should ensure that every teacher and student has access to a copy of the scoring guide following the assessment to assist in the appropriate interpretation of the scores.

14. Provide more opportunities for student writers to define their own topics and to develop topics in their own way.

**Recommendations: State Level**

1. Increase support for the Oregon Statewide Writing Assessment. Expand the scope of the assessment to include more students at more grade levels, and provide more training opportunities for teachers. If possible, regionalize the training and scoring activities to provide opportunities for teachers throughout the state to participate as readers and to gain the inservice benefits that are part of that experience.

2. Provide increased support to projects such as the Oregon Writing Project and the statewide Oregon Writing Festival which demonstrate a strong commitment to improving writing skills among students and teachers alike.

3. Follow up assessment results with a statewide teacher survey to determine how many teachers are familiar with and are using components of the writing process, how many are familiar with or using the six analytical traits as a component of instruction or assessment, and how many are using writing as a way of building thinking skills.

4. Recommend to the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission that it require greater emphasis on preparation for the teaching of writing skills within college and university teacher training programs for teachers in all disciplines, and that such preparation include instruction in the fundamentals of sound classroom writing assessment.

5. Encourage ESDs to coordinate activities that support writing instruction and assessment.

6. In future state writing assessments, continue and expand opportunities for teachers from participating districts to serve as raters on the analytical scoring team.

7. Ensure that the State Board of Education, legislators and budget committees have an opportunity to hear from classroom teachers about the fundamental impact that their participation in the statewide writing assessment has had on their knowledge of classroom assessment, their con-

fidence in assessing student writing, their ability to teach writing effectively, and their way of thinking about student writing.

8. Explore the need for specific workshops on these and related topics:

   - Effective classroom assessment practices
   - Analytical writing assessment
   - The link between assessment and instruction
   - Teaching to the traits
   - Effective conferencing
   - Managing peer review
   - Using writing to build critical thinking skills
   - Assessing writing in the content areas
   - Teaching students to revise and edit effectively
   - Using word processing in writing instruction
   - Effective use of the writing process

   In addition, regionalize inservice activities to reach more teachers throughout the state.

9. Identify teachers who are teaching writing effectively, and sponsor regional conferences to offer these teachers opportunities to share their ideas with other teachers of writing.

10. Encourage presentations on the Oregon Statewide Writing Assessment at the Elementary Principals' Conference, COSA, the Secondary Principals' Conference and other forums. Ensure that those who are considering building or district level assessment have an opportunity to hear and understand the benefits of the teachers-teaching-teachers approach to assessment which is the heart and strength of the Oregon analytical model.

# Chapter 2:
# Strengths and Weaknesses in Student Writing—
# A Trait-by-Trait Analysis

Since 1985, when Oregon conducted its first statewide analytical writing assessment, numerous districts throughout Oregon and the Northwest have chosen to assess students' writing skills analytically. Additional information and sources of training are now available from the Assessment Section of the Department of Education.

## Scoring Procedures

Obviously, an effective writing assessment requires the efforts of a qualified and dedicated scoring team. The construction and activities of the 1989 scoring team are described below.

**The scoring team.** A team of 25 raters met during March to score the results of Oregon's 1989 writing assessment. Raters had been carefully screened and interviewed by the scoring director (who had served in that role for the 1985 and 1987 assessments as well) prior to selection for the team, and were required to have strong language arts skills and familiarity with the purposes and philosophy of the assessment. Many had current or previous teaching experience at or near the eighth grade level. In addition, many were professional writers, editors or journalists, and approximately half had had several years' experience as analytical writing assessment raters, having served on the team that scored papers for the 1985 and 1987 Oregon Statewide Writing Assessments, as well as for several Oregon district assessments.

In addition, in 1989, teachers from buy-in districts (those which were not included in the basic sample but chose to participate at their own expense) were invited to join the scoring team following two days of training. Several districts chose to participate in this way, and sent teachers to Portland to be part of the team. During training, raters read and scored numerous student papers and defended their scores based upon the scoring guide. Through discussion and repeated comparison of their own scores to those of colleagues, raters became increasingly confident and competent in applying the scoring guide, and also learned to avoid many of the common causes of rater bias (e.g., poor handwriting, a tendency to ignore one trait in favor of another).

Training really consists of building a team philosophy about writing, and of learning to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of student writing consistently. Raters combined their expertise, experience and insight as members of an interpretive community. They teach one another, and they learn from one another. Training consists of more than learning to assign scores consistently and accurately. It also consists of helping teachers of writing gain a deeper understanding of (1) what makes writing work—or not work—and (2) how to help students in the classroom develop and build on writing strengths.

Brief "refresher" sessions were held throughout the scoring process to give raters additional practice in scoring papers as a group. Raters also rescored papers they had scored earlier to ensure that their application of the scoring criteria remained consistent.

**Scoring procedures**. Each paper was scored twice, by two separate raters working independently. Rater 2 did not know what scores has been assigned by Rater 1 since Rater 1's scores were concealed before the paper was given to Rater 2. Scores were written in pencil on the front of each writing sample booklet. (See Appendix F for a copy of the front page of this writing booklet.) Each paper received twelve scores (two for each of the six traits). Scores on different traits—say a 2.5 on Ideas and Content, a 3.0 on Organization and a 4.0 on Voice—were never combined in any way to produce an "average" or "total" score; that would defeat the purpose of the analytical approach, which is to determine where relative strengths and weaknesses lie within a piece of writing. Students' papers were returned to them following the assessment so that they could see precisely how the two raters had scored each of the six traits.

**Resolutions**. Sometimes even trained, experienced raters do not agree precisely on what score a paper should receive. A certain range of disagreement is allowable, however, since small differences merely reflect the fact that in real life not everyone reacts precisely the same way to a piece of writing. For example, if Rater 1 assigns the trait of Voice a score of 2.5, and Rater 2 assigns that trait a score of 3.5, it is likely that most trained readers would assign a score within that range (2.5, 3.0 or 3.5). Differences of up to one point (e.g., 1.5 and 2.5) between raters were considered acceptable. Papers containing any scores that differed by 1.5 points or more were either resolved by a third reader, or returned to the raters who had assigned those scores so that they could review their scores and re-rate the papers. Disagreements at this level occurred on roughly 3 percent of all traits scored.

Several methods were used to keep interrater consistency high. These were

- Regular group scoring of "problem" papers (identified by raters).
- Continuous refresher sessions throughout scoring.
- Continuous large and small-group discussions of the traits and their interpretation.
- Regular feedback to individual raters on their personal performance relative to that of the group.
- Occasional rescoring of papers to ensure that raters were scoring the same way throughout the process (i.e., not assigning a paper one set of scores early in scoring, then assigning the same paper very different scores later in scoring).

All raters had identification numbers, and recorded these numbers on the test booklets as they assigned scores. Raters who tended to score high or low with respect to any trait received immediate feedback on that tendency, and had a chance to rectify it through additional practice or conferencing.

The degree of success attained in promoting interrater agreement in this assessment using these procedures is indicated in two statistics. First, data accumulated during scoring revealed that scores assigned to the same paper by different raters varied by 1.5 points in only 3% of all traits scored across all papers. Papers varying by more than 1.5 points were reviewed by the two raters or resolved by a third reader. Second, the interrater reliability of scores was estimated using a correlation coefficient. The chart below gives these estimates for each trait reflecting an encouraging level of consistency among independent raters:

**Table 2**

| Trait | Interrater Reliability |
|---|---|
| Ideas | .80 |
| Organization | .77 |
| Voice | .77 |
| Word Choice | .70 |
| Sentence Fluency | .78 |
| Conventions | .84 |

**Papers that could not be scored**. Occasionally, it was necessary to omit a paper that could not be scored in the usual fashion. Such papers were coded as follows on the front page of the writing booklet (See Appendix F):

- **Too Short** (TS): Blank or extremely brief papers (one sentence, sometimes two).
- **Illegible** (IL): Papers that actually cannot be read at all, despite attempts by several different raters.
- **Non-English** (NE): Those in which all or most of the paper is written in a language other than English; such papers can only be fairly assessed by raters fluent in other languages.
- **Miscellaneous** (MS): This category covers special considerations which apply to only a very limited number of papers. For example, raters do not score poems because poetry is a special literary form which does not lend itself well to evaluation by the criteria within the Analytical Scoring Guide.
- **Off Topic Scorable** (OTS): Papers in which the writer does not address the assigned topic, but does provide a sample of his or her writing that can be fairly scored using the scoring guide criteria. Results for these papers were not entered into the final data showing state averages (because, for assessment purposes, performance on two totally different tasks cannot be fairly compared), but the scores were returned to students and their teachers.
- **Off Topic Nonscorable** (OTN): Papers in which the writer makes no effort either to address the topic or to produce a piece of writing that might be suitable for assessment. Most such re-

sponses consist of a comment on the assessment topic or procedures. Some open letters to raters or teachers are scorable, some not—depending on the level of attempt and the seriousness with which the student writer approaches the task.

### Using the Scoring Guide to Interpret Results

The guide in its current form is reprinted trait by trait on the following pages, together with line graphs illustrating eighth graders' performance with respect to each trait. The graphs illustrate performance in 1985, 1987 and 1989. Remember, when comparing results however, that students in 1985 and 1987 responded to different prompts. Also keep in mind that in 1985, raters did **not** assign scores at half-point intervals. They used a whole-point scale (but the same scoring guide) in which the only possible scores were 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.

In analyzing results, please read the description of each trait carefully. You may also wish to review the list of Key Strengths, which summarizes the essential characteristics raters look for in reviewing papers with respect to each trait. Remember that Oregon's analytical scoring system is based on the balance of strengths and weaknesses. At the 3.0 level, strengths and weaknesses are in balance. Beginning at the 3.5 level and moving up the scoring scale, strengths outweigh weaknesses—and at the 5.0 level, strengths dominate and weaknesses are negligible. Similarly, beginning at the 2.5 level and moving down the scoring scale, weaknesses begin to dominate—and at the 1.0 level, strengths are negligible.

### Results Trait by Trait

The following analysis reveals the average scores for eighth graders as a whole, trait by trait, the specific strengths and weaknesses raters identified with respect to each trait, and the percentages of students for whom strengths outweighed weaknesses or vice versa. A few student papers are reproduced here as examples. (Where names, towns or other identifying information were included in the originals, they were changed to protect the student's privacy.)

Obviously, writing is a highly subjective and personal task, and each student's writing is a little different from all others. Nevertheless, the examples help illustrate some of the common problems and strong points that raters discovered in the papers.

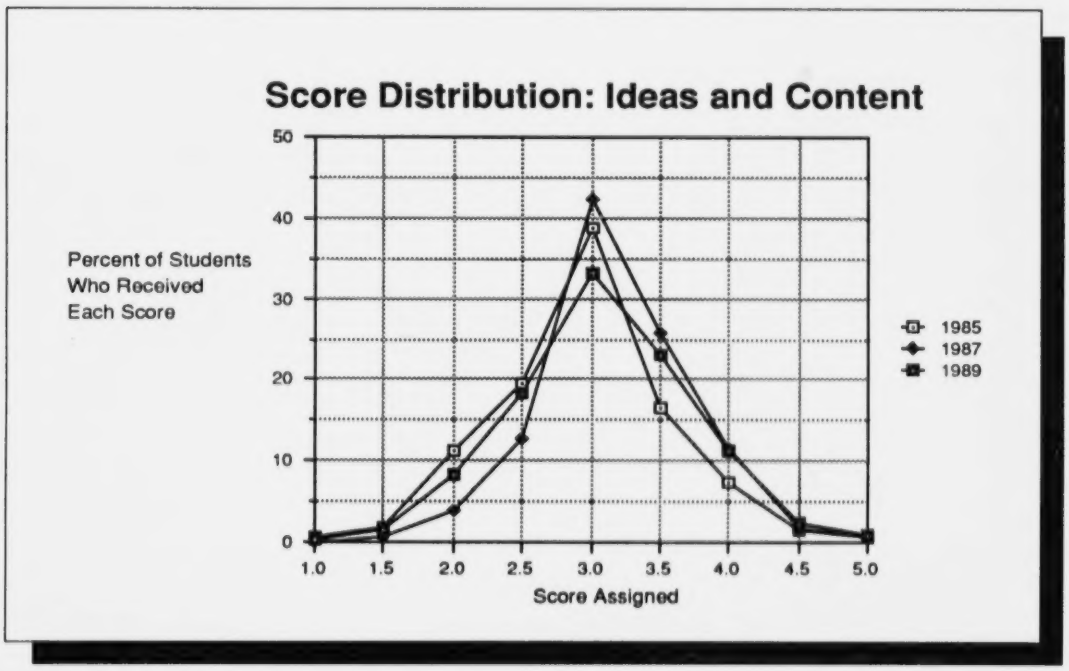
> Students demonstrated a wide range of performance with respect to every trait. It is worth noting that while many students revealed weaknesses that demand our attention, many others showed remarkable skill in writing. The purpose of this assessment has been, therefore, not only to focus on what is wrong, but also to identify what is working well in order to give credit and recognition to the many students and teachers who are experiencing success with writing.

Keep in mind in reviewing these scores that individual students' scores—as well as averages for a class or school—may differ considerably from what is reported here. Each student's performance represents a brief glimpse into his or her capabilities based on one task performed in three days. We recognize that many factors—including illness, attitude, fatigue, understanding of the assignment, and previous experience—may influence a student's performance. Therefore, instructors must use

their own discretion and judgment in determining whether the scores for an individual student are representative of that student's abilities. Within the classroom, assessment scores represent one piece of information which the teacher may combine with other less formal assessment results to determine a particular student's current level of writing skill. But across the state, the factors affecting performance tend to balance out so that the averages for eighth graders as a whole provide a genuinely accurate profile of actual writing skills.

## Trait 1: Ideas and Content

In 1989, the average score for eighth graders across the state on the trait of Ideas and Content was 3.08; in other words, for the typical student, strengths slightly outnumbered weaknesses. Overall, 38% of the students revealed more strengths than weaknesses on this trait (compared to 26% in 1985 and 39% in 1987); 28% revealed more weaknesses than strengths (compared to 33% in 1985 and 17% in 1987). And 33% scored right at the mid-level; that is, their scores revealed a balance of strengths and weaknesses on this trait (compared to 42% in 1987 and 39% in 1985). (Percentages in this and subsequent summaries may not add to exactly 100% because of rounding and because a very small percentage of papers—e.g., those which were blank or too short—were not scorable.) The following graph illustrates the distribution of scores on the trait of Ideas and Content across the three years of analytical assessment.




NOTE: In comparing performance for 1985 to that for 1987 and 1989, keep in mind that slightly different scoring scales were used. In 1985, raters could only assign whole-point scores: 1, 2, 3, and so on. Thus, only 4s and 5s were considered as papers in which strengths outweighed weaknesses; only 2s and 1s were considered as papers in which weaknesses outweighed strengths. In 1987 and 1989, because of the half-point interval scale, it is possible to view scores of 3.5 and above as denoting predominant strength, 2.5 and below as denoting predominant weakness.

**Trait Description**

**Score point 5**: This paper is clear in purpose and conveys ideas in an interesting, original manner that holds the reader's attention. Often, the writing develops as a process of discovery for both rater and writer. Clear, relevant examples, anecdotes or details develop and enrich the central idea or ideas.

- The writer seems to be writing what he or she knows, often from experience.
- The writer shows insight—a good sense of the world, people, situations.
- The writing is often enlivened by spontaneity or a fresh, individual perspective.
- The writer selects supportive, relevant details that keep the main idea(s) in focus.
- Primary and secondary ideas are developed in proportion to their significance; the writing has a sense of balance.
- The writer seems in control of the topic and its development throughout.

**Score point 3**: The writer's purpose is reasonably clear; however, the overall result may not be especially captivating. Support is less than adequate to fully develop the main idea(s).

- The reader may not be convinced of the writer's knowledge of the topic.
- The writer seems to have considered ideas, but not thought things through all the way.
- Ideas, though reasonably clear and comprehensible, may tend toward the mundane; the reader is not sorry to see the paper end.
- Supporting details tend to be skimpy, general, predictable, or repetitive. Some details seem included by chance, not selected through careful discrimination.
- Writing sometimes lacks balance: e.g., too much attention to minor details, insufficient development of main ideas, informational gaps.
- The writer's control of the topic seems inconsistent or uncertain.

**Score point 1**: This paper lacks a central idea or purpose—or the central idea can be inferred by the reader only because he or she knows the topic (question asked).

- Information is very limited (e.g., restatement of the prompt, heavy reliance on repetition) or simply unclear altogether.
- Insight is limited or lacking (e.g., details that do not ring true; dependence on platitudes or stereotypes

- Paper lacks balance; development of ideas is minimal, or there may be a list of random thoughts from which no central theme emerges.
- Writing tends to read like a rote response—merely an effort to get something down on paper.
- The writer does not seem in control of the topic; shorter papers tend to go nowhere, longer papers to wander aimlessly.

**Key Strengths**

With respect to Ideas and Content, raters look for a paper that's very focused, with a readily identifiable theme. The theme might take the form of a purpose, major outcome or point of view: what the writer thinks or feels about life. Successful papers tend to focus on clear development of one idea, rather than to skip lightly over a long list of seemingly unrelated or insignificant details.

Specifically, the key features of strong papers include the following:

- The writing is clear and well-focused.
- The text stands alone; it does not read like the answer to a question (e.g., "Mine is my horse.").
- The central theme, purpose or main idea is evident, even if it is not stated directly.
- The writing holds the reader's attention.
- The theme or central idea is well-developed, with telling details that the reader could not anticipate or "fill in."
- Ideas often show originality or a fresh perspective.
- The writer seems to be writing from experience; the writing seems both valid and insightful.
- The writer uses his/her insight, experience, knowledge and intuition to make connections or associations that enrich and expand the meaning of the text. Often, the writer draws information from more than one source, integrating ideas to create a larger theme.

**Sample Papers**

The following papers reflect some problems or weaknesses on the trait of Ideas and Content:

Dear Dawn,

How are you? I'm fine I know this is only my 2nd letter to you exept dawn hears 15 things we use to do: program computers, program v.c.r., dub tapes, put together models, splerg mony, play arcad games, bild stuff, tell dirty jokes, get into trouble and not to get caught, pratit some Marshel arts, play poker, get into the hamster busness,

wear sweaters, and chat if there's anything more you want to know just wright or call you know my number looking forward to your letter. Bye.

Sincerly yours
Barney

* * * * *

**My favorite time of year (Summer Time)**

During summer I did a lot of drastic, exciting, and thrilling things. On nthe first month of summer I did a lot of tanning and swimming, sometimes I would go horseback riding.

The second month was drastic I went shopping, and out of town but the best thing was my friend's envited me to a back to school pool party. I decided to go, and I had a blast. We were all dancing, talking, and sharing secrets, with each other. Also I went up to enchanted forest where I rode go-cart's and water-slides. I went down sone rides inside of enchanted forest that were scarier than ever.

Know finally the third and final month, I went to a beach party, at harris beach were we played volleyball and the guys surfed. We had a picnic and listened to music. I met this guy named Sean Blond hair, blue eyes, and muscular, he came from california of course. we had fun together, but the fund had to end. the next day we had to go to school and Sean had to go back to California. Everyone had to go home because it was getting late. So everyone went home, and said good-bye. Me and Sean gave each other a kiss and left. that was the last time we saw each other.

* * * * *

The following papers reflect a balance of strengths and weaknesses in Ideas and Content:

From a very early age most people get to go and visit their grandmother. When you get there she often tells you stories of the "good old days" and hands you a plateful of cookies to dip into an ice cold glass of milk. This stereotype-old, sitting in a rocking chair, whistling the time away-is just not true for my grandmother. My grandma, as I'll call her now, is a very unique individual who has influenced my life in many ways.

For instance, she is fluent in French which she enjoys teaching me. Once I get there she is always ready to instruct me on new French words. Even though she loves teaching me, I never can memorize all the words put before me.

Outgoingness is another one of her positive traits. She is never afraid of people no matter what they look like. On account of this, she has made friends with practically every person in the small town in which she lives. It's either that or the large sum of money which she holds in possession.

Gratitude is another fine quality of my grandma. She always has chores for me to do when I come to visit. I do them. Instead of saying "good boy" and forgetting about me, she'll take me out to eat or give me a little spare change.

My grandma is the best grandma anyone could have. She loves to teach me. Whether metally or physically she gets the job done. She also shows gratitute and affection towards me. If I had to choose, I'd pick my grandma all over again.

* * * * *

One night when I was alone at home my cat, Cleo came up to me and started . I thought she had to use the bathroom so I opened the front door but she didn't go out, she just me everywhere. Then I realized she was having her kittens.

I thought fast and then walked to my room. In my closet was a box with some old towels in it. I had prepared it a couple weeks earlier

Cleo new where she was soppossed to go, she walked right in the box and had four kittens. I helped her the whole night and never left her. I loved it!

The first kitten was orange and white tabby. The second was a calico and looked exactly like her mother. The third one was another orange and white tabby and looked exactly like the first one. I think they are twins so I named them Garfield and Gizmo. I didn't have any trouble with them only with the forth one.

He wouldn't come all the way out. And Cleo was going around in circles. I had to hold her back leges until she could force it out. Finnaly he came out. I named him Toby.

I've always wanted to be a vet and then when my cat came to me and following me, asking me to help her in her own way. We had four beutiful kittens and then I knew I would be a vet, have to be.

* * * * *

The following papers reflect predominant strengths on trait of Ideas and Content:

Writing is more permanent and thus more formal than talking, but is it possible to get to know someone very well by books alone? This is how I know Isaac Asimov, the famous writer. Isaac Asimov has been writing since 1939, and has written several hundred books. This prolific writer writes about every subject, from astronomy to mystery, from human nature to poetry, but the first works of his that I read science fiction.

Most of Asimov's science fiction is written in short stories. He often publishes these in books, of which I have read several. Before each short story he will give some autobiographical information. These anecdotes have told me most of what I know about his humor, his feelings, and his early life. I have been encouraged by him to write with more feeling, and his stories gave me my taste for science fiction.

Isaac Asimov's science writing has developed my interest in science to a great extent. I was greatly interested in a physics book of his in which he explained clearly and carefully the workings of subatomic particles. Asimov has also written various books on astronomy and many essays on these and other subjects. His writing in these is clear and logically presented. I have become so interested in science writing, especially astronomy and physics, that I eagerly read the science magazine Discover monthly. Isaac Asimov's writing on science and science fiction has made a major difference in my life and proved that one person can influence another through writing.

* * * * *

I never really got to know my Grandma Grace very well. Even though she was my father's mother, she was hardly ever talked about or discussed within our family. Around Christmas time or for her birthday we would send her a greeting card, but we would never write a letter to check up on how she was doing.

I always felt that my father resented her for something in the past. Yet, I wasn't old enough to find out exactly what it was.

I knew she was an alcoholic. Still, I was too young to really know how serious her illness was.

I remember one year Grandma came to spend Christmas with my family. I was 10 years old and this was the first time I could remember being around her for more than a weekend. She seemed like a regular person and I began to discover a whole new addition to our family. An addition I felt would be fun and exciting.

However, as the year progressed, Grandma became very ill. She was always coughing and gagging because of her smoking. She was always too tired to leave her mobile home. And I was rarely ever able to see her anymore.

Then during the winter of 1986, Grandma was diagnosed with having terminal cancer.

The next week was very difficult for my whole family. As soon as we heard this terrible news, we headed to Boise to spend our last Christmas with her.

We spent most of the holidays in the dismal waiting room of the hospital watching "Gilligan's Island" reruns.

My brother and I weren't allowed back to see my grandma until quite a while after she was checked in.

I've never really seen my dad break down and show his emotions, but after these past few days I could tell he was about to.

Then it happened. Two days after Christmas, Grandma Grace pased away.

My family stayed with my aunt until the funeral. And during this time, I learned the reason my father resented his mother so.

During my dad's childhood my grandma abused him and his brother's and sister's because of her drinking. Dad grew up with a feeling of hatrid for his mother. Now I could understand why he resented her so.

The funeral came a few days later and our family went home.

When I think of the extrordinary pain that she went through and how she scarred her life and the lives of people around her, I almost want to cry. Even though I loved her very much, I hope and pray that I will never become an alcoholic.

* * * * *

**A Man Called Floyd**

During the sixth grade, at some time during the year, all the classes in the Beaverton School District went to Outdoor School. For five days we slept in cabins, hiked at night and did other things concerning the preservaiton of our natural evnironment. When we first got there and stepped off the large yellow bus, with the plastic seats, windows that wouldn't open and a strict teacher, we were a bit frumpy. But when we saw all the counselers we felt a lot better. There was one person in particular, that grabbed my attention, he stood there, singing the welcoming song in an oversized army jacket, round John Lennon sumglasses with green metallic lenses and a dusty brown colored hat that looked like the type a detective would wear. His hair was a messy blond pile sticking out from underneath his hat and his face was unshaven and looked very happy. I knew that I liked him from that moment on. At the campfire he sang the fun active songs. These songs helped me let go and I became less worried about what people thought of me and started to concentrate on having fun.

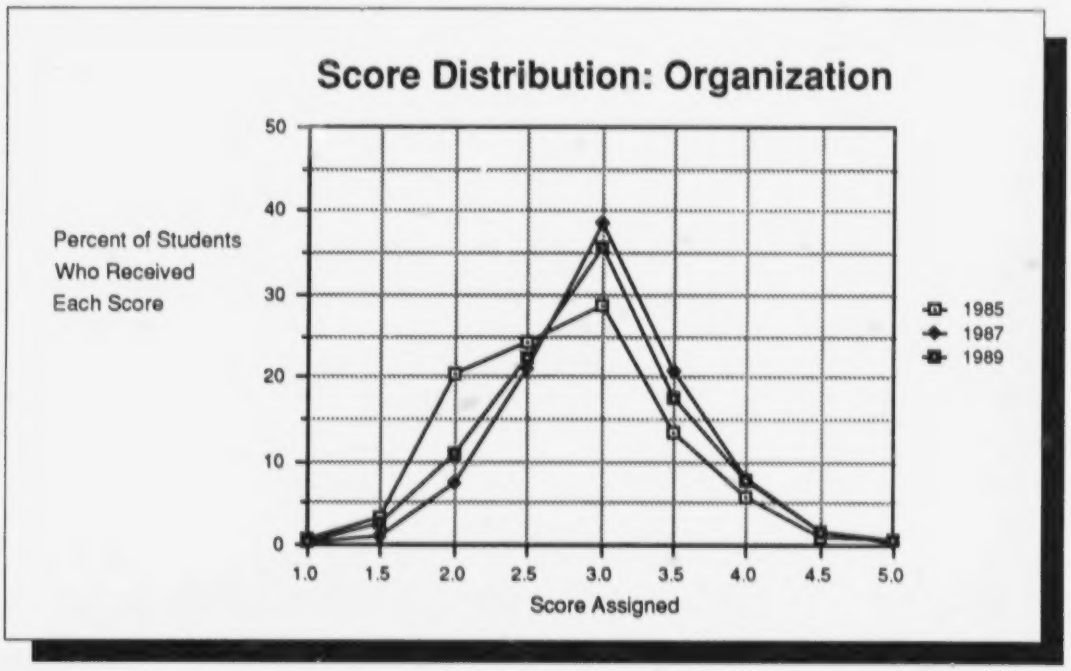
There were name tags we had to wear that had our names on it but the counselers names were made up, his was Floyd and his name tag was easily the most impressive. It said Floyd in black letters with pink shadows, the shadows were on a brick wall with a little mans head peeking over. I learned that he took the name Floyd because his favorite band was Pink Floyd and the wall in the background stood for an album of theirs that was his favorite, it is titled The Wall.

There was a strange dance sort of thing he would do, it was named The Floyd by the kids. He stood on one leg shake all the other parts of his body around that he could. Everybody in the camp tried to do it but nobody could do it nearly as well as he. Everyone tried to be just like him but I couldn't so I figured I would just be me.

After I left outdoor school I wrote him some letters. Their reply took a while but the letters were all worth it, they had drawings and a newspaper type thing telling what he was doing and what he wanted to do, like finish High School and get a job at Marvel Comics, then there was a refresher course on what we learned at the camp. After those letters I saw him several times just driving around, we kind of lost touch after that. At least until last Christmas when I wrote him a letter. He wrote back with the usual long return time but again when I got the letter I wasn't mad any more. It had the newspaper titled "Future Floydians of American and Beyond" with all the regular sections plus a bonus. It was a very skilled detailed drawing of the main character of his comic strip that he sent to Marvel to let them see if they'll publish it, the character is "Space Cat Oreo." I was inspired by his skill, knowledge and uniqueness and I know that, thought I can't be like him I can learn from him, I know that I can have fun and still be safe and not be as shy as I used to be. I learned how to protect my environment but most important, to just be me and be proud of who I am

## Trait 2: Organization

The average score for 1989 eighth graders on the trait of Organization was 2.94, indicating slightly more weaknesses than strengths overall. This was the weakest area of performance statewide, with 27% of the students demonstrating more strengths than weaknesses (versus 31% in 1987 and 20% in 1985); 36% showing a balance of strengths and weaknesses (versus 38% in 1987 and 29% in 1985); and 36% demonstrating more weaknesses than strengths (versus 30% in 1987 and 49% in 1985). The following graph illustrates the distribution of scores for the trait of Organization across the three years of analytial assessment.




### Trait Description

**Score point 5**: The writer organizes material in a way that enhances the reader's understanding, or that helps to develop a central idea or theme. The order may be conventional or not, but the sequence is effective and moves the reader through the paper.

- Details seem to fit where they're placed, and the reader is not left with the sense that "something is missing."
- The writer provides a clear sense of beginning and ending with an inviting introduction and a satisfying conclusion ("satisfying" in the sense that the reader feels the paper has ended at the right spot.).

- Transitions work well; the writing shows unity and cohesion, both within paragraphs and as a whole.

- Organization flows so smoothly that the reader doesn't have to think about it.

**Score point 3**: The writer attempts or organize ideas and details conhesively, but the resulting pattern may be somewhat unclear, ineffective, or awkward. Although the reader can generally follow what's being said, the organizational structure may seem at times to be forced, obvious, incomplete or ineffective.

- The writer seems to have a sense of beginning and ending, but the introduction and/or conclusions tend to be less effective than desired.

- The order may not be a graceful fit with the topic (e.g., a forced conventional pattern, or lack of structure).

- The writer may miss some opportunities for transitions, requiring the reader to make assumptions or inferences.

- Placement or relevance of some details may be questionable (e.g., interruptive information; writer gets to the point in roundabout fashion).

- While some portions of the paper may seem unified (e.g., organization within a given paragraph may be acceptable), cohesion of the whole may be weak.

**Score point 1**: Organization is haphazard and disjointed. The writing shows little or no sense of progression or direction. Examples, details, or events seem unrelated to any central idea, or may be strung together helter-skelter with no apparent pattern.

- There is no clear sense of a beginning or ending.

- Transitions are very weak or absent altogether.

- Arrangement of details is confusing or illogical.

- There are noticeable information "gaps"; the reader is left dangling, or cannot readily see how the writer got from one point to another.

- The paper lacks unity and solidarity.

**Key Strengths**

With respect to Organization, the raters look for a paper with a definite sense of pacing; it may or may not have a conventional pattern (e.g., the traditional five paragraph essay), but the progression of events does move the reader through the paper in some logical manner without getting bogged down in repetition or extraneous information. The organization may be based on a recurring theme, an

evolving idea or impression, a careful building to a climax, a gradual revelation of information or resolution of some question, or a time progression.

Specifically, the key features of strong organization include the following:

- The primary theme or purpose drives the organization (and not the reverse). Everything in the paper relates to and helps develop that central theme or purpose.
- The reader can move easily through the text. Organization is so smooth, the reader is hardly conscious of it.
- The writer shows a strong sense of sequencing, and presents details at the right moment.
- The writer may not follow the most obvious pattern or sequencing; often there is a surprise twist, an unexpected development, and introduction that seems to plunge into the middle of things, a flashfack, an unanticipated conclusion or some other feature that shows real creativity in ordering information.
- The pacing is just right. The writer doesn't rush from point to point, nor dwell endlessly on trivia.
- Transitions are smooth and strong, helping the reader see the connections between ideas.
- The beginning is inviting and makes the reader want to keep reading.
- The paper builds to something—a climax, high point, revelation or conclusion; there is some identifiable "important moment" that stands out.
- The conclusion has a sense of resolution; the paper doesn't just stop, nor does it belabor what's already been said.

### Sample Papers

The following papers reflect problems or weaknesses on the trait of Organization.

Dear Friend,

Two years I took a trip with a family. We went all over the country. This is letter telling you about the trip.

First we went to Denver, Colorado. My Aunt from New Mexico came up too. My Uncle Bill and Aunt Rose have two children named Fern and Heather. They are now five and two. We suam and went to club. We had a lot of fun. From Denver, Colorado we went to Amarillo, Texas to visit Grandpa and Grandma. We always eat at cafeterias with all the different kinds of food. Its really fun. There are also a lot of museums we go to.

From Amarillo, Texas, we went to Jackson, Mississippi. There are also a lot of museums there. We visit my Aunt Lois and Uncle Milton with there five kids. They are now Jean 14, Michel 12, Robin nine, Sara five, Kelly two.

From there we went to Indiana. Where we see Iris, Grandpa, Uncle Arnie, Tante Ruby, Aggie, Uncle Roger, Tante Kate, Uncle Mark, Tante Janna, Milly, Chris, and Benjy. There we mostly played. Then we came home because we were tired.

Sincerely
Jennifer

* * * * *

**My trip to Happy Trail**

| | |
|---|---|
| 4:o'clock am: | We get up, east breakfast, and do some last minute packing. |
| 4:45am: | My family gets in the car and we drive to the beach. |
| 6:15 am: | At Happy Trail Campt Site, we set up our tents and camper. |
| 7:o'clock: | We are on the dreaded trail to the beach, but cannot stop thinking about the girls. |
| 12:30pm | We ate lunch at the Pancake House, (I ate chicken) |
| 4:35pm | Ahhh! I lost my glasses when I went under a huge wave. My Dad finds them on the beach a few minutes later. I keep them in my bag just in case. |
| 6:00pm | East dinner at A&W (an ice cream parlor) |
| 7:00pm | We retire for the night. |
| | Next day |
| 7:45pm | Rise and Shine. We eat a small breakfast and walk to the beach. I go body surfing. |
| 8:30am | My brother and I go to the hole in the rock and met two girls, and talk for hours. |
| 1:15pm | Make plans to meet the girls at A&W at 6pm. We swim the rest of the day. |
| 6:pm | East dinner with the girls, and get thier phone number, they are from Gold Beach a city close by. |
| 7:45pm | Leave fore home. |
| 10:o'clockpm | Get home, and retire for the night. |

* * * * *

**Memories**

A memory that is very important to me is the memory of my Uncle Fred on Halloween when he dresses up like a pumkin. I sort of felt sorry for him because he couldn't sit down. The suite was paper, orange and green paper.

The stem had a little hole for his face. His feet had green paper wrapped around them he was the biggest pumkin I've ever saw. I was dressed up like a mummy, Ill try to remember what my reletives were dressed up like. My Aunt Becky was a Tooth ferry, Mom was a belly dancer, dada was an Arub, Grandma was a witch and Grampa was a Worlock, that all I can remember about the costums. There was alot of food, and everyone was having fun.

The End

* * * * *

Remember the time my Grandma moved to Texas. It was at the end of August. She was packing things into boxes and we went down there to pick some stuff up that she was giving us. MY uncles moved with here, too, but the main reason she was moving was because Uncle Ben had a job. On the way over Sam, her dog, got sick. She thought he would get over it but halfway over she had to take him to the vet and get him put to sleep.

The cat yolwed a couple of times and then she quieted down. The rest of the trip was uneventful. Right now she lives in a house in Dallas, texas. It has a pool and one diving board. She also got a new dog. It's a Beagle hound. Uncle Ben had a wreck on his motorcycle and broke his leg in 2 or 3 places. He has pins in them now and he's hobbling all over the place. The cats doing just fine.

* * * * *

The following papers reflect a balance of strengths and weaknesses on the trait of Organization:

**Memory of Dukey**

When I was eleven years of age our family owned a dog we named Dukey. In the summer of '87 he died. I will always remember the sad expression on his face before he died and the look of peace after he was gone. It was a shock to the whole family when he died and I don't know who felt worse me, my parents, or my sister. All I know is that the memory of him will stay with me the rest of my life.

The day he died we had gone shopping and come back to find him as happy as ever. As I was making a trip to the kitchen with a lode of groceries my mom yelled for me to come. As I ran to the door I saw Dukey on his side gasping for air. While my mom called different vets I stayed outside trying to comfort him as best I could. When she had found a vet that was open we picked Dukey up, put him in the car, and sped to the building.

When we had reached the vet to women put Dukey on a stretcher and carried him inside. It seemed like forever had gone by when the veterinarian finally came out and told us that we would either have to put Dukey to sleep or keep him on medication and have an unhappy dog. It was then that we made one of the toughest disisions of our lives. We told him to put Dukey to sleep.

When he died many things traveled through my mind. I thought about what it would be like without him. I thought about my parents and sister and about how they felt. Most of all though I thought about how he had been a friend to me not just a pet.

I will alwyas remember that day and I will always keep the memory of him close to my heart. He was not just a dog he was a friend and companion. When I think of him I will think of one thing, love. Goodbye Dukey.

* * * * *

I was riding my bike with a friend one day when we stopped by an old barn to look and see what was inside of it. We heard a strange sound like buzz-thump-buzz buzz-thump buzz-thump. We looked around to see where the sound was coming from. It was coming from the window. I saw a blurr ramming the window. It looked like the blurr was outside. We looked closer and it seemed to be a large bug and it was inside. We looked closer again and it seemed to be a small bird, a humming bird. I tried to get up to it, but I was too short to reach it. So I found a box and stood on it. I got close to the bird and put my hands far around it and slowly closed it on it. The bird didn't fight at all. Each of it's wings were like a single feather. It fidgeted and chirped a couple of times. Then I showed my friend the bird. I walked out of the barn and opened my hands. It looked dead for a few seconds, but it's eyes were moving. Then it realized it could get away and zipped off into the forest.

* * * * *

The following papers reflect predominant strengths on the trait of Organization:

**Airplane Ride to Adulthod**

I can't believe I'm doing this, I thought, looking out through the round plastic window. From a few thousand feet above the ground, the green and gold of Oregon's fields became a quilt, embroidered by a creative hand. The sky above the airport, as we took off, had been gloomy for June; the clouds hung like dismal rumors of a rainy day.

But I had, I thought, lived too long in Oregon to be dampened by wet weather. With difficulty, I suppressed the urge to jump up and down for joy - the joy of flying alone, playing at being a responsible adult among the other adults on the flight to San Francisco.

As if to match my mood, the airplane rose, and we flew above the clouds. I shall never forget that feeling of being screened from the earthbound world with the white couds like fluffy frosting on an angel food cake. The sun shone in through the window like a warm smile.

The Airline stewardess asked me if I wanted some soda. Accepting a glass of seven-up, I realized that this plane ride, for all I was flying alone, was not different from others I had taken with my famly. I had been afraid when

I first heard that my aunt had invited me to spend the weekend with her in San Francisco. I had remembered the complexity of tickets, gates, and suitcases. Now, sitting in the padded blue seat of the airplane, I realized how easy it is to fly.

The cloud layer cleared gradually, below us, and the brown hills of California stretched beneath me like the ridges and valleys of a child's sanbox.

Soon, San Francisco itself entered my sight. The seatbelt sign went on, and I smiled again at the simplicity. If flying was as easy as this . . . or perhaps the smile was for the city itself. It looks so beautiful from the air! Soon I would be in it, sharing the thing money and imagination can create.

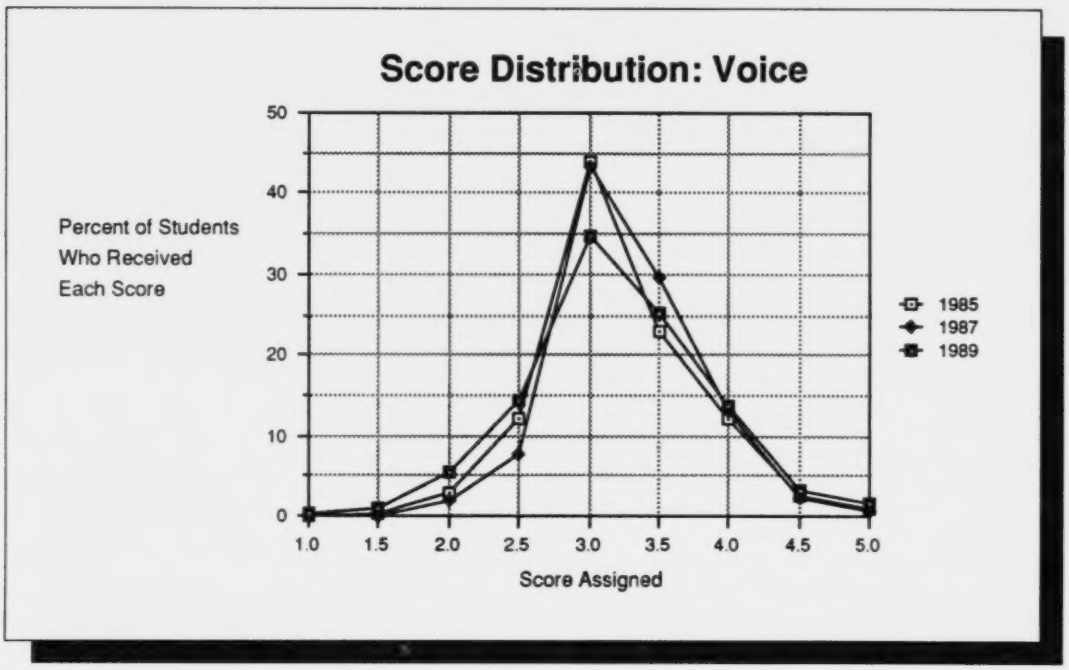
The airplane circled several times over the Bay, and I felt a momentary twinge of anxiety. The lack of land beneath us reminded me suddenly of the little talk they give you about floatation devices. But the airport is on the Bay, and before I knew it, the pavement whirled by; under our wheels.

I felt, as I walked through the brown corridor, that this first plane trip was a rite of passage between dependant childhood and treatment as a responsible, mature person.

* * * * *

## Trait 3: Voice

The average performance of eighth graders on this trait was 3.2, making Voice the strongest area of performance statewide. Strengths outweighed weaknesses for 44% of the students tested (versus 46% in1987 and 38% in 1985); strengths and weaknesses were balanced for 35% (versus 43% in 1987 and 44% in 1985); and weaknesses outweighed strengths for 21% of the students tested (versus 10% in 1987 and 16%in 1985). The following graph illustrates the distribution of scores for the trait of Voice across the three years of analytical assessment.




### Trait Description

**Score point 5**: The paper bears the unmistakable stamp of the individual writer. The writer speaks directly to the reader, and seems sincere, candid and committed to the topic. The overall effect is individualistic, expressive and engaging; this paper stands out from the others.

- The reader feels an interaction with the writer, and through the writing, gains a sense of what the writer is like.
- The paper is honest. There is a real effort to communicate, even when it means taking a risk (e.g., an unexpected approach or revealing of self).
- The writing is natural and compelling.

- Tone is appropriate and consistently controlled.

- The writer's own enthusiasm or interest comes through and brings the topic to life.

**Score point 3**: The writer makes an honest effort to deal with the topic, but without a strong sense of personal commitment or involvement. The result is often pleasant or acceptable, yet not striking or compelling in a way that draws the reader in.

- The reader has only an occasional or limited sense of interaction with the writer.

- Writer may seem self-conscious or unwilling to take a risk—may seem to be writing what he/she thinks the reader wants.

- Paper lacks individuality, or the ring of conviction.

- The writing communicates, but only in a routine, predictable fashion that tends to make it blend in with the efforts of others.

- Voice may be inconsistent; it may emerge strongly on occasion, only to shift or even disappear altogether.

**Score point 1**: The writer may not have understood the assignment, or may simply have felt indifferent toward the topic. As a result, no clear voice emerges. The result is flat, lifeless, very mechanical and stilted, or possibly inappropriate.

- The reader has no sense that this writer was "writing to be read," and experiences virtually no writer-reader interaction.

- The writing has virtually no individual personality or character; there is no identifiable voice behind the words.

- There is little or no evidence of the writer's involvement in the topic.

**Key Strengths**

Voice is the mark of individuality. With respect to this trait, raters look for a paper that stands out from the others, that has a distinctive sound all its own. A writer who projects a strong voice seems to enjoy the act of writing and to get caught up in it. The sense of writer-reader interaction (personal, very direct communication) is strong. In weaker papers, the writer seems simply to be writing to get something down on paper, or else to please the reader, to say what the writer thinks the reader will probably want to hear.

Specifically, the key features of strong voice include the following:

- The writing is personal and individual; it's as distinctive as the person who wrote it.
- The writer seems to speak right to the reader and to have a strong, well-developed sense of audience.
- The writer speaks with a sense of conviction, and seems to believe what he or she is saying.
- The writing is honest, open and natural—an extension of the writer.
- The text seems to have a kind of personality—a sound, a feeling, a flavor all its own.
- Often, the writing evokes strong feelings—joy, amusement, sadness, anger or empathy—in the reader.
- The writer feels a strong sense of rapport with the writer, a sense of writer-reader interaction.
- The reader has the sense of a person behind the words; this is not writing by computer or committee.
- The writer seems to be saying what he or she truly thinks and feels, and does not hide behind platitudes, familiar sentiments, or ideas commonly expressed by others.

## Sample Papers

The following papers reflect problems or weaknesses on the trait of Voice:

This story is about a weekend that I spent with my best friends at my house. The dance was that night so we all started getting ready, but first went to the store for Lorie. On the way down there it started hailing really hard and we were all hyper. I always have the best times when I'm with my friends. When we were waiting in line for the dance, it started snowing hard and covered the ground. Jolynn, Lorie and I were all in a great mood, when we got home, around 10:30, we all played in the snow and had a great time to remember. The next day we found out that it had snowed the night before. We all got slightly exited. So we had a bunch of people come over, but one certain person came over and woke us up. Jolynn was getting us in a good mood, but she had Tommy hold me down so she could tickle me, which is one thing they love to do to me.

That day we were suppose to meet Scott at the store, exept my mom had to take Lorie and Jolynn home so they fun times had to come to and end so we could get their stuff together and take them home. That was one of the great times I could never forget.

* * * * *

My Best Friend

My best friend has influnced my life by getting me out of a jam. Or helping me when I don't understand some thing. I feel that your best friend might be more important than your parentes. Some people think your family might be more important than any of your friends.

Maybe some eventes or a slight mess up might make a diffrence. Most of your best friends keep you company.

Usally your friends keep secerates about them that you told thierself. I feel that it dosen't matter if he or she is diffrent because every one is diffrent. If we wern't there would be lots of me's or you's running around. Or if thier not popular it just matters if you like one another.

* * * * *

Heather hi,

What have you been up to lately. Me nothing. You have really influenced my life scence I met you.

You have been my best friend scence the 3rd grade you will always be. You have always been there when I needed you.

You are always there when I was feeling down and you always lifted my spirits. When are you moving back to Oregon? Well I better go. Write back soon:

Your best friend
Rochelle

* * * * *

The following papers reflect a balance of strengths and weaknesses on the trait of Voice:

**The Joy of Catching a Fish**

"How much farther is it?" I asked my dad.

"Not much farther," he replied.

My dad and I had been planning a fishing vacation for a couple weeks now. And the closer we got to that day, the more excited I became. Then one day, it came. It was the day for us to leave and go catch some fish. The trip to the lake takes about three to four hours and by the time we got there it was pitch black. We weren't able to find a spot in the campground so we searched for a spot along the road. The place was packed, but we soon found a spot and stopped to sleep in the car.

The next morning i woke up fresh and ready to start the first day of fishing. It was nippy outside, but soon we got the boat loaded and set off. I was driving and my dad was setting up the fishing gear.

It took around fifteen minutes to get where we wanted to go, but I would soon find that it was well worth the time it took.

Around fifteen minutes after we started fishing, my bobber started to move. And, without warning, my bobber shot into the water like a bullet. I was so excited I couldn't sit still.

After a few seconds my dad suggested that it was hooked on to a log. I didn't blame him for saying that because the line was so taunt and the bobber was underwater so it did give that impression. It didn't feel that way though. The line started to move slowly and I insisted that the line wasn't stuck, A few seconds later a fish jumped clear out of the water and came down with a big splat.

I soon realized the fish was on my line and I slowly but forcefully started reeling it in, my heart was pumping wildly. It was a tough job and it looked as if my rod was going to snap.

In a while I had a huge rainbow trout flopping around in the boat. My dad got out a measuring tape and measured the length. The fish was twenty inches long. That was the biggest freshwater fish my dad or I have caught in that lake, or in any other lake.

On our way home I felt a certain pride in me where nothing could overcome the happiness of catching that fish.

* * * * *

**Tawnya**

I have known Tawnya for four and a half years and we are now best friends. Tawnya is the nicest person I have ever known.

She influenced the way I thought about people. Before I met he I was very deppressed and generally very rude. After I met Tawnya I had many, more friends because I wasn't being rude to anyone anymore. Tawnya would talk to me when nobody else would. She showed me what I was doing that nobody cared for and I did my best to change those things. The reason I changed was because I saw someome trying to help me so I tried. She showed me that someone cared about my feelings. Tawnya told me I could do and be anything I wanted to be. For three years before then I thought I had to be just what everyone else wanted me to be.

The way she acted towards me was different than the way she acted towards other people. She seemed to sense I had a problem and she was very nice to me. I don't think I would be the way I am if it were't for my best friend Tawnya.

When I was in the Fourth grade I was the most deppressed then. I was glad I met Tawnya because she would sit by me and talk to me. She helped me through the times that teachers were having really tough times with me. In the fourth grade I was not getting any of my work done and my teachers were very frustrated with me. Tawnya told me I could do my assinments and do them well. By the fifth grade I was alot happier with myself and the people I was around.

The way Tawyna Influenced my life was so great that I cannot even begin to thank her for it.

* * * * *

The following papers reflect predominant strengths on the trait of Voice:

**Granna**

I remember spending an afternoon with "Granna" (my grandmother) before she got married. We went shopping and out for lunch. The day was hot, so we walked to an ice cream parlor and bought double scoops! When you're nine, this is very impressing. We took our double scoops to a park across the street and talked.

As I was explaining the importance of Smurfs to my grandmother, ice cream began to dribble down my arm, I jerked the ice cream to my mouth and gave a big lick, getting it all over my nose and chin. I flicked my tongue at my wrist before Granna handed me a napkin. I cleaned myself up and gave her a warm hug. "I love you." I murmured.

Now Granna is married to Roger Jamison. Roger's a nice enough guy, I guess. Very different from the gruff man I remember my grandfather to be. I love Roger, and I'm glad he's with my grandmother, making her happy. We're all very close. But sometimes, just once in a while, I wish it was just Granna and me, in the park, with ice cream on my face.

* * * * *

**Candlestick Park**

I will never forget the night of August 12, 1987, at Candlestick Park, San Francisco, when the Giants lost to the Dodgers 4-3. It was the first major league game that I had ever been to. I remember how angry my dad was at the rest of the family for not bringing warmer clothes. I had on every sweatshirt that I had brought to San Francisco, and I was still freezing.

It took a long time to walk from the parking lot to the seats. We were sitting on the second row on the side by right field. I could see pretty well. The National Anthem played, and the game was underway.

We bought some hot dogs. They were spicy. A man came along selling hats. I wanted a souvineer, so I bought the cheapest one for eight dollars.

Then Candy Maldenado came up to bat. My dad told me to pay attention, because he was one of a few batters that batted right handed that night. That meant a foul ball was more likely to come our way. The pitch. The swing. CRACK! The ball came hurtling our way very high and very fast. I lost it momentarily in the bright lights. My dad swore. It was heading right for us.

It actually landed about six rows to the left, and bounced. The bounce landed a row up. I was already in the aisle. A man tried to grab it, but he knocked it under the seat in front of him. I dove under the seats where he had knocked it, and I slid through all the popcorn, peanut shells, and ice that is on ballpark floors. About three other hands reached for the ball, but mine snatched it up first. "Sam's got it!" my suprised mom exclaimed. Instinctively, I held it above my head in victory.

The man sitting next to us asked if he could see it. I let him, but I never took my eyes off of him. My dad joked how he had been trying for the past 40 years to catch a ball, and I get one on my first try.

The Giants lost that game, but it was exciting the whole way through. I think it was Mike Marshall who ran into a fence while going after a fly ball, and Candy Maldenado almost hit a home run that would have won the game. (The outfielder snagged it on the warning track.)

I wonder if I ever get to go to another game, if it will be as exciting as this one.

* * * * *

**Life's Secret**

I was furious. Never in my entire life had I been so blind with anger. Jabbing the blue pitchfork into the dirty wood shavings, a prong sprang off and struck me squarely in the forehead. That caused my anger to boil even more.

I was supposed to be cleaning stales at Falling Rock Ranch, but all I was doing was destroying the place. Being one of those days, nothing was going right for me that fall afternoon. My best friend and I had gotten in an argument, ending up in the silent treatment. I had left my lunch at home and nobody would lend me any money. On the way to the barn, there was a Fun-Tac fight on the bus. Instead of honey-colored hair, I stepped heavily off that dirty yellow schoolbus with a sickly bluish-colored mass of knots for hair and proceeded to drop my books all over the side of the road. The walk the rest of the way to the English riding ranch was at least without catastrophe.

As I was mumbling and grumbling to myself, a voice was suddenly cleared behind me. I whirled around to face whoever it was, dropping my pitchfork on the way. Behind me stood Millie Hofstead, my employer and riding instructor.

"Tings not going so vell?" she inquired in her heavy German accent.

"Mm," I muttered in return.

"Is dis your last stall?" she asked.

"Ych," was my angry reply.

"How about a talk?" Millie interrogated, smiling faintly as she noticed the broken prong laying on the stall floor.

That started a long list of my complaints about friends, family, school, and people's actions and attitudes.

Millie listened patiently, never interuping. After I was finished rambling on, she began to speak quiietly, softly, gently. I listened, enraptured, to the soothing music of her German voice.

"Life is not fair. You tink everyting is going your vay, den a day like dis comes along". She paused for a breath.

"When dat happens, do not get angry. If you get angry, den everyting vill get vorse, and life has beaten you. You have got to laugh at life's tricks and pranks. Dey are noting but little tests to see how strong you really are.

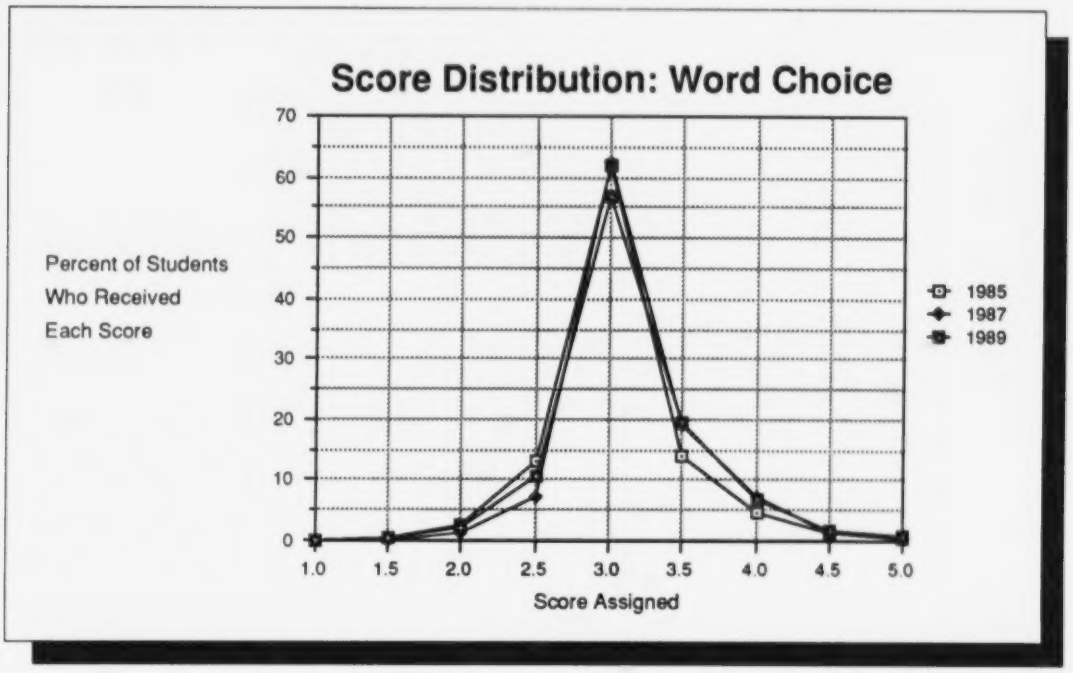
Anger causes harshness," She went on. "Dat is veak. Der is noting stronger in de vorld den gentleness. It vill vork every time. Are anger and harshness going to get you to the Olympics? No! Vill anger and harshness get you anyvere in dis vorld vith your horse? No! Alvays be laughing, happy, and gentle. Den you vill vin life's game."

Millie's talk had a huge impact on my life. No longer would I get angry at little things like one bad day. I knew that I could win - I could beat life. I had life's secret hidden away in my mind and heart. it would be with me always.

* * * * *

## Trait 4: Word Choice

Students' average performance statewide on the trait of Word Choice was 3.13. Strengths outweighed weaknesses on this trait for 28% of the students tested (versus 28% in 1987 and 20% in 1985); strengths and weaknesses were in balance for 57% (versus 62% in 1987 and 62% in 1985); and weaknesses outweighed strengths for only 13% (versus 8% in 1987 and 16% in 1985). The graph below illustrates the distribution of scores on the trait of Word Choice across the three years of the analytical assessment.




### Trait Description

**Score point 5**: The writer consistently selects words that convey the intended message in an interesting, precise and natural way. The result is full and rich, yet not overwhelming; every word carries its own weight.

- Words are specific, accurate, and suited to the subject. Imagery is strong.
- Lively, powerful verbs give the writing energy, visual appeal, and clarity.
- Vocabulary may be striking, colorful, or unusual—but the language isn't overdone.

- Expression is fresh and appealing, fun to read. The writer uses cliches or slang sparingly, and only for effect.
- The writer may experiment with uncommon words, or use common words in a delightful way.
- Figurative language, if used, is effective.

**Score point 3**: The writer's word choice is adequate to convey meaning, but the language tends toward the ordinary. The writer doesn't consistently reach for the "best" way to say something, but instead often settles for the first word or phrase that comes to mind. The result is a sort of "generic paper" that sounds familiar, routine, or commonplace.

- Language communicates quite well, but without a sense of satisfying fullness or power; the reader has the feeling it could have been written better.
- Imagery may be weakened by overuse of abstract, general language.
- Though the reader can interpret the meaning quite readily, some words lack precision or vigor.
- Attempts at the unusual, colorful or difficult are not always successful. The language may seem overdone or calculated to impress rather than natural.
- Though an occasional phrase may catch the reader's eye, cliches, redundancies and hackneyed phrases pop up with disappointing frequency; there are few surprises or enticing twists.

**Score point 1**: The writer is struggling with a limited vocabulary, often groping for words and phrases to convey meaning. Meaning may be difficult to determine (e.g., the writer says one thing but seems to mean another), or else the language is so vague and abstract that only the broadest, most general sorts of messages are conveyed.

- Writing is often characterized by monotonous repetition, overwhelming reliance on worn, threadbare expressions, or heavy reliance on the prompt (topic) itself for key words and phrases.
- Imagery is very weak or absent; the reader lacks sufficient concrete details to construct any mental picture.
- Words tend to be consistently dull, colorless and trite.
- In some instances, word choice may seem careless, imprecise, or just plain wrong.

**Key Strengths**

The right word at the right moment is the heart of effective word choice. Raters look for a strong, precise vocabulary, but the language should sound natural, not forced, and should seem to suit the writer and the purpose of the paper. Stronger papers may show some flair for colorful or figurative language, but even more often, their strength lies in the writer's knack for using common words well.

The result is vivid imagery that lets the reader feel he or she is right there, involved in what is happening. Specifically, the key features of strong Word Choice include the following:

- The vocabulary is strong, varied and appealing.
- Words are used appropriately and effectively.
- The writer avoids repetition.
- Precise nouns make the imagery strong; it is easy to picture what the writer is talking about.
- Lively verbs (not is, was, are, were) energize the writing.
- Words are often simple—yet expressive.
- Reliance on cliches is minimal; words and phrases are fresh and distinctive.
- Memorable words and phrases linger in the reader's mind.
- Now and then, the reader finds him or herself saying, "Ah, now that was a good way to put it—I liked that."
- The words just feel right.

### Sample Papers

The following papers reflect some problems or weaknesses with respect to Word Choice:

When I was in the sixth grade, I got involved with a club, and it was very fun, but sometimes I got into trouble. And I even got a sitation, and I even got detention. And had to come in on noon recess, to have detention. And then I was back right in detention again, just for pushing a recess duty teacher, and she got real mad, and gave me a three pointer, for that. When my friends saw that they all laughed and said youre cool, and they even said you are a real dude. And that was that. And Then I had to go to school, at Happy Acres Grade School, when I was in the 7th grade, and I had to have Mr. Quimby, for a teacher. And after that I never got into much trouble. At Happy Acres Grade School, but I did get into a lot of trouble, at my other school, like I did at my other school, Or I even didn't get detention again, I do wish I was back at my other school, so I can have fun with my friends.

* * * * *

It was a fervent sunny day when my brother, my sister, and I set out on the most daftiest escapede that had ever come to pass in our lives.

We had all servied our backpacks and the wield pocket knife that I received for my eight birthday. The millstone we had was buoyant and was easy to convey. So us set off through the Douglas Fir trees that made a good path, and past the junkyard. Up the logger's road past the great oak tree we walked transversing how fun it be to get lost. It sounds crazy but it's true. Yes we set out to get lost. We had tried it a great many times but were always had been constained to go back because of leaving to eat or having plans the same night. We kep on walking. As we walked we conversed of how school was out, and how fun it would be to go up on Ernie's Peak which was right by our house.

While we played we went further and further from our house on Old Park Rd. Mabey since we were having such a good time no one really noticed how far we had really gone. When we came out of a clearing we saw a house not to far away so we decided to take a look around. It was a old house with oak trees all around it. My brother went first since he was the oldest. Stirring through the grass like spies we approched the house. We knocked

on the door, yet no anwser came from the decayed, fragile house. I placed my hand on the earthy structure. Bawing only once I slowly opened the door unraveling the mystery behind it. Nothing. Sweat dripped off my head and hit the floor. I turned back to see the reasurance from my racketeers close behind. They montioned me to follow. As I walked back that night with my brother and sister I knew it would be and always be a fantastic memory with we shared that night we tried to get lost.

* * * * *

One person who has influenced me is my Dad. He has influenced me in knowing if I needed him, he would be there for me. Another one of these ways he's influenced me is being around him and knowing that that's is the way I want other people to feel around me. He has made an influenced in my life by the way he punishes me and the way I know more about the future from what he tells me. I feel secure and happy just being with him. One of these ways he influences me about the future are things like getting an education, wanting to work for money, and housing & bills. Another way he has influenced me in the future is the advantages of work, housing, and family. My Dad has helped me through times of good and bad and has influenced me in this way. He has influenced me in my life for being what he is and more. one other way he has influenced me in my life is taking me to places such as omsi, carnivals and more and knowing that I will always remember these places with him. He has always givin me the life that I want to live in. My Dad has influenced me in all of these categories not just as a Dad, but as a friend also.

* * * * *

The following papers reflect a balance between strengths and weakness with respect to Word Choice:

The most memorabole event in my life that I can recall was just two years ago, the year I made Lower Columbia All-stars. You had to be 11 or 12 to make the team, I was twelve. The baseball team was picked by coaches around the League. Each couch picked two players that they felt were good enough for the team, and would play there best in an out of town tournament. Just getting on the team was a real accomplishment, and then to my surprise I was told I recieved the most votes. During the regular season I played catcher, I also did a little pitching. Now it was tournament time. When we got to Portland we were ready to play baseball. Our first game was against Kenton, we lost the game 9 to 3. kenton eventually went on to win the tournament. One more loss and we were out of the tournament. We battled back to win our next two games. In those two games we beat Lakeside 10 to 1, and we beat Parkrose 8 to 4. Our fourth game we played Ranier. We were in the lead the whole game, except in the last inning when our pitcher gave up two runs. In our final turn at bat we could not get the runs we needed to catch up. We lost the game 6 to 5. The tournament was a real experience. Next year I made All-stars again but in a higher league.

* * * * *

My mother has influenced my life a great deal. She has cared for me each and provided me with all of life's neccessities with joyfulness and love instead of hesitating or sighing in frustration.

Cooking secrets is what she has shared with me. Generous and caring is what she has helped me be. My mom has taught me useful manners and how to have sincere respect for authority.

My mom has comforted me when I was sad and in tears or when I broke a favorite toy.

Throughout my years of life my mother has made me feel richer than fine gold, stronger than a lion and more special than all her potted plants.

Each and every day my mother serves to me an abundant amount of love combined with understanding, faithfulness, and good communication, she then sprinkles with lots of hugs and kisses and ends it all with one great big smile.

Although at times we may disagree or aruge just a bit I still feel she is grander by afar and I do so regret the words or things that I do that might hurt my mothers feelings or make her very sad. I do so love her much and feel she is the best. No other mother could be compared with her, for she would surelly outdue them all just any day and in time you to shall see that she indeed is best than all the rest.

* * * * *

The following papers reflect strong Word Choice:

**A Horse Story**

I sat on top of the horse. If I fall I'll be crushed under its hooves. If I fall I'll be cut on the hand, sharp rocks that covered the sandy dirt. If I fall I'll hurt my pride.

My uncle stood beside me holding the reins.

"Dont let the horse know that your scared." He told me, "If you do, he'll take advantage of you" That didn't help much, but I listened poitely to him. "This is how you steer. Be gentle now, the bit hurts his mouth when you pull hard."

"Okay, I will." I said carelessly. If I agree with him my lesson will be over sooner, I thought foolishly.

"Don't hold the reins high or you won't have any control. Hold them low by your belly." His face shown with knowledge, and the willingness to share it.

"Now Danell, listen to what I've told you and you'll have an easy ride. Ah, remember to keep your legs tucked in to his belly." He patted the tanish hide. "I'm going down to the corral, holler if you need me."

"What?" I asked in disbelief. He left me sitting on the horse, and sauntered lazily down the hill, and around a mound of rocks to the corral. He either ignored me, or didn't hear me.

"Go." I said angrily, and kicked the gelding in the side. He didn't move.

"Dang horse." I mumbled. "Gity-up." I yelled and kicked again, this time with more force. The scared horse reared and took off at a run down the hill.

Terrified, I threw the reins and clinged to the beast with my arms and legs.

"Whoa!" I yelled to no effect. "Stop. Please stop!" he still barelled down the hill. I knew we would crash into the rocks and end both of our lives.

My uncle ran from behind the mound towards me. He shouted for the horse to stop, but it didn't, it just seamed to run faster.

By now my whole family had congregated on the veranda to watch what they seamed to think hilarious, and I thought terribly horrifying.

My uncle did a crazy, yet wonderful thing. He stepped into the path of the flying horse. I closed my eyes, I couldn't watch any longer.

I felt stillness. I opened my eyes one at a time. My uncle was petting the horse's mane.

It nickered softly, but I knew it was nervous laughter.

I climbed down. My legs like jello beneath me.

"Where are you going?" My uncle asked me sternly.

"Inside. I never want to see another horse again." I brushed my tangled hair out of my face.

"Whoa little lady, you get your bottom back on that horse this minute."

I started to object, but his stern look silenced me. I reluctantly mounted, and turned my most stubborn look on him. He didn't notice.

In the end, I rode Willie three more hours. By the time I was done riding, I had the horse under control, my uncle pleased, and a very sore bottom.

My experience taught me that in order to accomplish anything, try your hardest, be brave, and most importantly, never give up.

* * * * *

We arrived at the hamlet by the road from Saigon. The humidity was intense and the land was cloaked in dense fog. Certainly miserable weather to conduct an expedition in, but we were already a day behind schedule because the monsoon rains had turned the road from Saigon into a sludgy track more water than mud. Our automobile proved unequal to the task, so Jacques andI had to drive (push) it back to Saigon and pick up some mules. We were soaking wet when we reached the hamlet and so mud-caked we could barely carry its weight. The colonial officer cleaned us up at headquarters but warned us about the perils of an expedition up the Mekong during the monsoon season. I politely explained it could not get much wetter than it was here. I thanked him and we excused ourselves. We waded to a large boat stocked with crates and camping supplies.

Our rowing crew made excellent time. By the first day of rowing against the current we covered thirty-two kilometers. Jacques helped the rowers make camp on the bank in the rain while I trudged inland and explored. I chanced upon a new variety of jungle ivy and netted several exotic indigo butterflies. The expedition was engrossing, and I returned only as darkness fell. I walked faster at the thought of wild animals and returned only to find everyone standing stock-still with ash-white faces!

"By Jove! What's happend to you?"

Everyone simply stood there. I strode over to Jacques and shook him. As he opened his mouth I heard a low growl.

I turned to behold a gigantic tiger not four meters away. He looked hungry-but whether he was hungry or not was not an issue. I should have run like a cheetah and not stopped until I was in Phnom Penh. Instead I took out my revolver, looked the tiger resolutely in the eye, and fired two shots into the air. The tiger lingered for a second and then left for the jungle.

I turned to Jacques. He looked whiter than the sand under my feet.

"Next time," I stated succintly, "we camp on the boat."

Two days later, we camped tethering the boat to the trees on the shore with a length of rope. We were about fifteen meters out in the river. After the tiger incident no one dared come to the bank except me; I had to row in an empty supply-crate. This method proved quite successful and I classified one new variety of bird and spotted several rare species. My collection in the room on the boat proliferated.

It continued to rain much of the time; our expedition was often obliged to spread a tarpaulin between the room and the railing on the edge of the boat. The drier weather was unbearably humid and the insects were incessant, but we pushed on.

I rowed my supply-crate ashore that evening when a swift current caught me unprepared. The crate was smashed against something quite hard and I must have been knocked unconscious-a bad state to be in when you're floating on a river.

Jacques shook off his caution, plunging into the river at the risk of life and limb swam (or was carried by the current) to me. Fighting the current, he shouted to the rowers, who courageously dove in to aid Jacques. Within minutes they dragged me to the boat. Rain ripped at the tarpaulin as they tried frantically to revive me. A while later I cam to, groggy, with a rather large bump on the side of my head. Jacques bandaged it.

"Did you save me?" I asked, weakly rubbing the side of my head. "That was really very good of you..."

He grinned. "What is it-the Americans say-"... "What are friends for?" He continued wringing the cloth. "Today I take over for your expedition. You sleep."

He managed a very thorough job of it, too.

* * * * *

**The Catch**

It was a dreary Saturday afternoon when this all took plac.e It was raining and the grass was soaked with puddles everywhere. The infield dirt was muddy and all torn up by the spikes on the feet of these barbaric ball players.

I was in center field in the final inning of this baseball game against the redshirts of the opposing team. I usually play infield, but I play wherever I am needed. Anyway, dead center field was where I was and I had not had any action all day.

It was a fairly close game and we're a good team but we were only winning by one run. Just then, one of the other team's best hitters, and a very huge guy I might add, stepped up to the plate.

I stepped back four steps and to the right six. I had seen this guy play and he was good, so naturally I respected his ability.

"Let's go team! Strike him out!" I heard from one side of the bleachers.

"Knock the cover off the ball" I heard from another.

Our pitcher cooly eyed the batter and wound up. He let the leather covered sphere fly. I held my breath in anticipation.

"Ball one!" boomed the umpire.

I exhaled.

He pitched the ball four more times and when the dust had settled, the count was three balls and two strikes.

This is it, I thought, this will decide it. Either he gets out or we lose. Our pitcher let the ball go again and the huge batter took a giant, all-out, energy releasing swing at the ball.

"Whack!" the ball flew straight towards me.

I stepped up, ready to make the final out, but the wind caught it and carried it to the left. The ball traveled further and further to my left and was sprinting to catch up with it.

Then I lept. I flew straight forward with my arms outstreached, my glove facing up. When I was at the pinnacle of my flight, the ball dropped in to the palm of my glove and I dropped like a sack of potatoes on a wet lawn bag.

I landed and slid about five feet before I stopped.

I looked in the web of my glove and what I saw was a red-stitched baseball staring me right in the face. I leaped up in joy and accepted the high-fives and slaps on the back from my teammates.

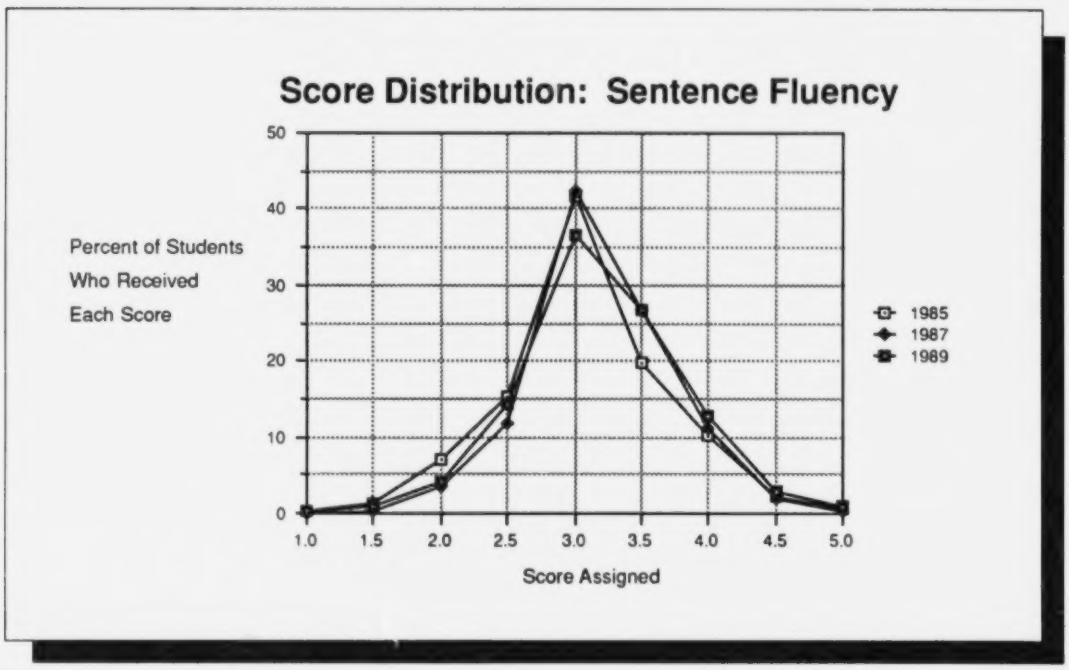
That was a moment that was so exciting to me that I will never forget it.

* * * * *

## Trait 5: Sentence Fluency

The average score on this trait was 3.19 indicating slightly more strengths than weaknesses. Strengths outweighed weaknesses in Sentence Structure for 43% of the students tested (versus 40% in 1987 and 33% in 1985); strengths balanced weaknesses for 37% of those tested (versus 43% in 1987 and 42% in 1985); and weaknesses outweighed strengths for only 20% of those tested (versus 16% in 1987 and 24% in 1985). The graph below illustrates the score distributions on the trait of Sentence Fluency across the three years of analytical assessment.

Insert graph — Score Distribution: Sentence Structure




**Score point 5**: The paper is fluid, and reads easily throughout. It has an easy-on-the-ear flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences have a strong and rhetorically effective structure that makes reading enjoyable.

- Sentence structure clearly conveys meaning, with no ambiguity.
- Writing sounds natural and fluent, with effective phrasing.
- Sentences are appropriately concise.

- Varied sentence structure and length add interest.

- Fragments, if used, are stylistically appropriate. They seem right.

**Score point 3**: Sentences are understandable, but tend to be mechanical rather than fluid. While sentences are usually correct, the paper is not characterized by a natural fluency and grace. Occasional flaws or awkward constructions may necessitate re-reading.

- Sentence structure sometimes clearly conveys meaning-and sometimes not. Structural problems may sometimes create ambiguity.

- Some sentences lack energy, character or effectiveness (e.g., they may be hampered by awkward structure, unnecessary complexity, roundabout expression, wordiness, dangling modifiers, ineffective use of passive voice, or repetitious beginnings—"I did this," "I did that").

- Sentence variety (length or structure) tends to be more the exception than the rule.

- Fragments, if used, may sometimes be ineffective or confusing.

**Score point 1**: The writing is generally awkward and therefore hard to read aloud. It does not sound natural. Sentences tend to be choppy, incomplete, or so rambling and irregular that it may be difficult to tell where one should end and the next begin.

- Because sentence structure frequently does not function to convey meaning, reader may pause several times to question what is meant.

- Sentences lack both fluency and correctness. The writer may not write in conventional sentences at all. Or, sentences may seem stiffly constructed, disjointed, endlessly meandering (e.g., many run-ons), or nonsensical.

- Short, choppy sentences relentlessly monotonous rhythms or patterns (e.g., subject-verb or subject-verb-object over and over) that produce a jarring or sing-song effect.

- Fragments are confusing or ineffective. Writer seems to have little grasp of how words fit together, or of where one idea logically stops and the next begins.

**Key Strengths**

In rating sentence fluency, raters often read papers aloud, listening to the flow and rhythm of the language: How does it "play" to the ear when you put it all together? Raters look not only for correctness, but also for grace, fluency and power. Stronger papers are characterized by direct, energetic sentences free of such problems as wordiness, awkward sentence patterns, dangling modifiers, non-parallel construction and so forth.

Specifically, the key features of Strong Sentence Fluency include the following:

- Sentence meaning is clear, not ambiguous.
- The writing is fluent, with an "easy on the ear" flow and rhythm.
- The text is easy to read aloud; it sounds natural.
- The phrasing reflects a style and grace that give the writing power.
- Sentences vary in both length and structure.
- Fragments, if used, are stylistically effective, and do not seem arbitrary or accidental.
- Each sentence seems to "set up" the next, so that the movement from one to the other feels smooth, natural, logical and right.
- Dialogue, if used, sounds natural; it echoes the way people really speak.

**Sample Papers**

The following papers reflect some problems or weaknesses with respect to Sentence Fluency:

Me and my Dad always liked to go gold mining and my Brother Brian. We all love it But Know we hardly Do go gold mining its lots of fun and Im sure every Body would like it But Know my Dad is in San Francisco. he is in a Junior Collage and he gets Straight A's he's a Straight a student he's real good going gold mining its just me and my Brother and my dad But its not the same anymore. I wish we could see our real dad again Because its lots of fun to Be with him and go gold mining pretty soon hell come Back and then we could go gold mining.

* * * * *

Tony, my brother has given a very optimistic outlook to the world to me. He instructed that I view every situation I might be confronted by as objectively as possible. Instead of playing the common role of "don't be over-sesntivie." when someone had insulted me, he explained insults and the wilted fillings that occurred together. With Tony's assistance I was able to comprehend an insult its intent. I know accept human nature along with the reality that I am not wrong or to be blamed for any hurt in a person or myself. "People often feel inferior to an individual, then because of that inadequate feeling; cause in comparison to that person, an insult (in there way of thinking) might gain a superior placement to that person." Tony tole me. My brother explained to me that often times people don't realize they have offended me, or that a person can easily be misplacing their anger. I have become much more knowledgable in the area of human nature. Now because of Tony I can express myself in a reserved manner.

For many years, Tony has tried extremely hard to keep me from harm, feel in any blanks I might have. When I turned 13 in 1988 my father was on a buisness trip and my brother had to work. My mother did nothing nor did she make any effort in celebration. My sister was buisy with other projects. My birthday was entirely un-noticed by my grandparents, parents, and sister. After Tony's arrival home he took me down to our front lawn and played baseball with me. He explained many technichees to me, and practiced catching and throwing with me. Despite my poor vision he kept practicing with me. I didn't recieve a present from that day to over one month later, except that. It was certainly the only one from the heart.

I am an acceptable skier (but not in the beginning) and that is all because of Tony. He has worked with me so much that I am now a "100% better skier.". He was swift to get me up when I fell by spraying me with snow.

Tony has been my best friend, brother, role model, instructor, and much more. When I think of him I realize he has been the V.I.P. in my life. Whatever he went through he took care of me. Now I realize what I need to do to become the person I want to be.

* * * * *

The following paper reflects a balance of strengths and weaknesses on the trait of Sentence Structure:

I have a friend. His name is Ted. He is a great kid too. Although he is a little different I still like him. Ted has been through a lot. Mentally, spiritually, and physically.

Ted has four brothers and one sister. He is also the second oldest. God stuck Ted in a hard place to be in a family. Family lifes been alright for him except he's special. Many times he likes to stay by himself and be alone. In other words he is kind of like a loner. However Ted does have a few fiends. Sometimes he even has a girlfriend.

He stands about six-two, rusty brown hair, and the biggest and darkest brown eyes. Tall and buff, all and all I think he's one of a kind.

Throughout my life Ted has influenced me a great deal. He has shown me how precious life is. People aren't just plastic figures waiting to be put down, knocked down, or sat on. Everyone is special. I never realized a lot of this until I met Ted. Does anyone realize life is like a bowl of ice cream. It starts out hard and people start to add flavor. But, soon it starts to melt and soon after nothing but glop is left. Ted is my friend. He is my brother.

* * * * *

It was a hot midsumner day at the final game of allstar competition. If we won one out of two games we went to the reginal finals. It was the bottom of the first and as usuall the coach hadn't started me. I don't know why I was as good as our other third baseman. finally in the bottom of the sixth the coach put me in. Here was my chance to prove myself.

The first ball hit to me was a hard line drive about three or four feet to my right. I took a few steps toward the ball, then backhanded the ball. Then I rocketed the ball to first.

Out! yelled the firtsbase umpire.

The second ball hit to me was a fast grounder I ran up to it, scooped it, and threw it to first base. "The runner was out."

Then there was a high fly hit to Mark , he dove for it, he caught the ball.

But then there was a fast grounder hit to John. It went right between his legs. That was the worst play he made. But after that he got ahold of himself.

We didn't win the first game so we had to play them again.

I started the second game. We batted first, butt I didn't because we got out before I had a chance.

The first part off the game we were doing good, but toward the end we got down on ourselfs. We ended up loosing both games. That was a real bummer. But I guess we had fun, that was the important thing.

* * * * *

The following papers illustrate strong Sentence Fluency:

**Sugar**

On a cloudy day in the beginning of winter, I saw my dreams come true right before my eyes. As we pulled up a small gravel driveway, she was standing there tethered to a hitching post.

"What's wrong with her back", I asked my father, for the horse in front of me had a slightly swayed back.

"Nothing honey, she just had a baby when we was really young", he replied.

We parked our truck, honked our horn, and saw a young woman step out of a small house.

"Come on out and take a look at her. She is thirteen years old, very gentle, and her name is Sugar". the friendly young woman explained.

I got out of the truck and started to walk toward the horse, who was starting to doze off in the sun that had peeked through the clouds. As I walked closer to her, she opened her eyes to see who was coming. She looked straight at me, and I know if she could have, she would have smiled.

There she was, a lovely bay mare with pretty, kind eyes. She had her bridle on and was starting to chew at it as if to say, "Well look honey, if your gonna ride me hurry up, 'cause I'm getting bored just standing here."

The young woman asked me if I wanted to ride. I said yes and she gave me a leg up. As soon as I sat down on the horse's back, she perked up. Still now, when I get on Sugars back, she lightens up the same way. Sometimes I wonder if on the night of January 4, if Sugar smiled at me.

Two years later we are still going strong. Every time I go out to see her I get compliments on how we are a well-matched team. I love Sugar and in a way, I believe she loves me too.

So she is now in the best shape she's ever been in.

* * * * *

When I woke in the morning and was getting ready for kindergarten, I noticed my tooth would wiggle whenever I bumped it with my tongue. I ran to the kitchen to show mom. As I ate breakfast, she told me a story about a tooth fairy and how I would get a surprise from her when my tooth fell out.

That day at school I had a lot of fun showing off my loose tooth. When a whole week passed, my tooth had started bending clear over when I bumped it with my tongue. Everyone of my friends were fascinated and impressed with it untill my friend Lisa got two loose teeth.

That weekend my family and I drove to Winconsin to visit my realitives, and have an early vacation. On the way back home I kept torturing my little tooth untill finally 'pop', out it came. I held onto the bloody little tooth untill we got to a Motel, and then put it into an empty asprin bottle.

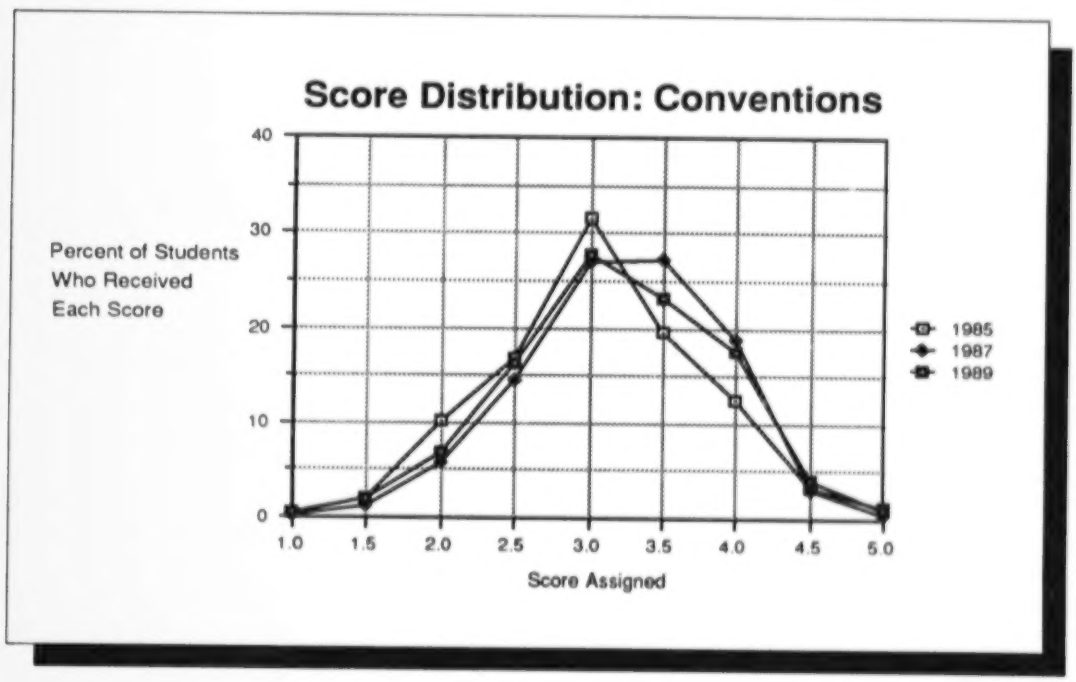
When bedtime came I was so excited I couldn't get to sleep. As I finally dozed off I let go of the asprin bottle, wich I had been keeping tight hold of, hoping to see the mysteriouse tooth fairy. In the morning I felt like I was supposed to remember something, but couldn't remember what. Just then my tongue felt my still tender gap, and I dove under my pillow searching for the empty bottle. Instead I found a cool, shiny quarter.

When I got back to school I showed everybody my gap, and my shiny quarter. I was again in the center of all the attention.

* * * * *

## Trait 6: Conventions

Average performance statewide on this trait was 3.18. Strengths outweighed weaknesses for 46% of the students tested (versus 50% in 1987 and 37% in 1985); strengths and weaknesses were in balance for 28% of the students (versus 27% in 1987 and 32% in 1985); weaknesses outweighed strengths for 26% of the students tested (versus 22% in 1987 and 30% in 1985). The following graph illustrates the score distributions on the trait of Conventions across the three years of analytical assessment.




### Trait Description

**Score point 5**: The writer's skillful use of standard writing conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, paragraphing) enhances readability. There are no glaring errors. In fact, while the paper may not be flawless, errors tend to be so minor that the reader can easily overlook them unless searching for them specifically. (Deliberate, controlled deviations from convention—in dialogue, for instances—are acceptable, provided they enhance the overall effect.)

- Grammar (e.g., noun-verb agreement; noun-pronoun agreement; verb tense; forms of nouns, verbs, pronouns and modifiers) is essentially correct.

- Punctuation is smooth and enhances meaning. Informalities, such as dashes or contractions, are allowed.

- Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words.

- Usage is generally correct, or acceptable given the purpose of the writing. The writer avoids double negatives (e.g., couldn't hardly) and nonstandard usage (e.g., could of been, more better, she had ought to do it, irregardless, leave me figure this out). Informalities (e.g., you will find rather than the more formal one will find) are acceptable.

- Paragraphing (i.e., indenting) works in harmony with the inherent organization of the paper.

**Score point 3**: Errors in writing conventions are noticeable and begin to impair readability. Reader can follow what is being said overall, but may need to pause or re-read on occasion.

- Occasional problems in grammar disrupt the flow of the writing. For example, agreement may be inconsistent; or there may be shifts in tense, improper verb forms (e.g., lay down here), improper pronoun forms (theirselves, me and Jim will go), use of adjectives for adverbs (he did good), and so on.

- Punctuation, capitalization and spelling errors may be sufficiently frequent or serious to momentarily distract the reader.

- Some usage problems (e.g., double negatives, use of nonstandard expressions such as irregardless) may be evident.

- Paragraphing is attempted, but paragraphs may not always begin at the right places. As a result, paragraph structure (indenting) does not always complement the paper's inherent organization.

**Score point 1**: Numerous errors in usage and grammar, spelling, capitalization and/or punctuation consistently distract the reader, taking attention away from the writer's message and severely impairing readability.

- The student shows very limited understanding of or ability to apply conventions.

- Errors in grammar and usage are frequent and tend to be very noticeable.

- Basic punctuation may be omitted, haphazard, or just plain wrong.

- Capitalization is often incorrect or highly inconsistent.

- Spelling errors tend to be frequent, even on common words.

- Paragraphing is illogical or arbitrary (e.g., paragraphs almost never seem to begin in the right places.)

## Key Strengths

In rating Conventions, raters look for the following key features:

- The writer's control over basic conventions makes the text easy to read and understand.
- Spelling is generally correct, or at least phonetic, even on difficult words.
- Grammar is generally correct.
- The writer handles shifts in tense correctly.
- The writer sticks with one point of view (I/we, you, he/she/they) unless a shift is called for.
- Punctuation works in harmony with sentence structure and enhances meaning.
- Usage is generally correct, though it may be informal if that's appropriate.
- Paragraphing works in harmony with the organization; the writer uses paragraphs and indents in the right spots.
- Capital letters appear in the right places.
- Only the lightest editing would be required to prepare the text for publication.

## Sample Papers

The following papers reflect problems or weaknesses with respect to the trait of Conventions (but note that not all are weak on other traits):

My Friend

When we were in frist Grade my friend was not my friend. I was a loner. Most of my friends were Alice and Joe. They were loner two. Johnny my friend, he pick on me in the first grade. But in the second we becane friends a little bet more. While I was in the forth grade we were good friend we picked on people togather. For the next couple of years we grew up togaether. We played and went to town with each other.

In the seventh grade he started to teach me some thing he told me how to ride motor bikes. We started to ride horses togather, we explored new land out were we lived. Johnny told me not to pick on people. Sometimes he helped me through the rought time. The time my dad yelled at me I was mad and he help me out and cheered me up. One summer I help him out he wanted to kill him self but I talk him out of it. The friends I have he is the best for me. Him and I spend a lot of time to gether. We go to dances we and our grilfriends. Johnny's grilfriend is Carol and mine is Michelle. At school we hate the pripes we wish they were gone forever and ever so we could do are on things to gether. We tell each other every thing we do even kissing a gril we tell each other, "right John" "right Ben". So you know about John.

* * * * *

Dear Annie,

Gosh I miss you ever since you moved to California my life has been a drag, all my Friends have a girl Friend but not me.

Lets talk about something else, will my parents and I went to bend for a Snowboarding trip gust last week end. We stayed in a fancy Inn, called "Touch of Class" man, Im teellen you it was fancy! it even had a telephone hooked to the toilet.

how have you been? I wish I could see or get your number, I want to hear your voice agian, mabe I can come and see you over Spring Break, but I will only see you for about Three day because your Spring Break is different then mine, I well gust have to wate tell summer I guess?

So I say agine, I miss you so much I had so much fun last summer, the time I had with you was something spiecal.

Will I guess I got to go now cant wate tell summer? OH wen you write me back coud you send me a picture, I lost I oter one, Sorry !

Yours Trully
(Forever)
Chris

* * * * *

The following paper shows a balance of strengths and weaknesses with respect to Conventions

It was about 2 years ago it was a normal school day. Louise, my best friend, was walking up my driveway to get me so we could go to the busstop. We stayed in the until seven o'clock then went out to catch the bus. We were slitely early. The sun was shining through the clouds as we walked. Soon we reached the bus stop no one was there. The wind blew our shoulder length, blond hair back. The clouds were moving swiftly as a slite breeze blew. Suddenly everything was quiet except for a truck driving quickly in the distance. Louise and I glanced at each other in.amazement. Suddenly Louise spoke, "Did you feel that?" "Yes," I replied. "That was the wierdest thing that ever happened to me!" Louise exclaimed. "Me, too," I said. We stood silent for a minute as the thoughts raced wildly through our minds. Then I could hear the sound of heavy foot steps I turned and glanced quickly down the road and saw that my nieghbor was walking up the road. Suddenly the wierd feeling escaped us. "I still feel a little wierd, like we were in heaven or something" Louise whispered. "Me, too," I whispered back. Everything was normal. The bus was there almost to a complete stop with it's yellow lights flashing. Everyone boarded the bus. Slowly the bus pulled away as we drove to school.

This paper is strong in Conventions:

**The Gift**

To me there appears to be two basic types of people, complex people and simple people. Aside from the obvious effects my parents have had on me, the one that I treasure the most is their molding of me into a complex personality.

What I am grateful for is that I am not the one who writes to a magazine for amateur astronomers and wants to know what the Milky Way is. I am not the person who reads nothing but comic books, nor am I the student who elects to take a band class inorder to escape Home Ec., and then doesn't practice. Because of my parents I, am learning Japanese, play two insturments, am likely to start learning C this summer, have a garden, know some carpentry, and can grasp basic ideas in quantum physics. When I see the other people around me, the comparison makes me doubly appreciative of my parents' gift.

For a better understanding of how this happened, I should explain some aspects of my early childhood. One of my earliest memories is that of accompanying my mother to the Universaty of Oregon where she was conducting research in the field of microbiology. On many of those occasions she would demonstrate the use of various peices of equipment and explain their purpose.

At home we would grow cultures of bacteria and fungi, and then examine them under a powerful microscope. This was where I first became interested in minute things.

Later, my father taught me gardening and carpentry while I helped around the house. But to him I am most thankful for teaching me mathematics and electronics early. Although my first projects were small, recently he helped me construct a highvoltage generator capable of creating an arc almost an inch long.

Finally, my parents made me culturally and geographically literate. With them I have travelled over seas to Japan, Britain, Scotland, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, and Wales. They also awoke in me an appreciation for classical music and Shakespearean plays.

For all this I am grateful, and perhaps you can understand why. My parents have given me much more than a head start, the finishline of success is already in sight.

* * * * *

One memerable moment in my life is when my seventh grade baseball team made it to the championship game against our cross-town rival. That was the first year that I was on a winning baseball team. We won eleven out of thirteen games. Our usual team lost eleven of thirteen games.

We stayed close the whole game and then in the top of the seventh, which was our last time at bat, we were behind 10-7, but we would come back yet. We were hitting well and we loaded the bases. We got three runs out of that and miraculously, the score was tied! Then it got better. We scored two more runs and took the lead, 12 to 10. We had won the game . . . . . - almost. The other team still got to bat. We could handle them, no problem. We were wrong.

We got the first two batters out quickly and then we really got confident, but number '20' ruined it for us. He smashed a three-run-homer over the left-feilders head. That was the end of it. They were the champions and we were the second-place team. What a way to end a season.

After the game on the way home I began thinking about the past season. We had beaten every team at least once and here I was thinking, about what a bad team we were. We weren't a bad team, we were a great team! We just came one swing of the bat away from a championship.

Ever since that game, I have taken any sporting event (or anything else) seriously. Even if we play the worst basketball team or the last place football team I play like they were the best team and like it was the last game of my life.

I don't remember this day because I had a winning hit or because I struck out the last batter, I remember it because I'm proud. My seventh grade baseball team was the best team I've ever been on.

* * * * *

The following paper is reprinted to illustrate the striking difference that can occur between Conventions on the one hand (which are quite weak in this paper) to Ideas and Content (strong) and Voice (strong) on the other.

**Challenge (Not a true story)**

A warm summer day in June the slight brez was comferting. We sat like stumps in the grassy feald wating for somone to do the dare. No one had the courage to do the dare even if it was eating the worm that sat in the middle circle.

Sandy sat in a grin looking everyone and then looking at the worm. Her thoughts were she did the dare so she didn't half to eat the slimy worm.

The circle was still realy quite no one moved no one breved. There eyes were looking at the worm with discust. The chalenge between the worm and the kids was vary grate there mouths were gauked open and there eyes

were opend as wide as could be.

The gigel from Sandy was so agriating that I couldnt let her get away with calling me a chicken. By the time I thought about eating the worm it had mangeled over to me I felt myself say out loud "I will do it I will eat the worm!" every one looked at me in amazment I picked up the worm and I about stuck it in my mouth and Sandy yelled "tear it in half". I took the worm pout 4 fingers around it and pobled it in 2 parts. One part I stuck in my mouth and gulped it and the other half went down write after and from then on when we played truth or dare they never called me a chiken

* * * * *

## Special Considerations in Scoring Conventions

Notice that this trait covers grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, and paragraphing. Raters must consider all these factors in assigning a fair score.

In reviewing the results, it is important to be aware that raters did not count errors or make marks of any kind on the papers during scoring. There are several reasons for this:

1. Marks made by one rater on the paper inevitably bias other raters who review the paper.

2. Counting errors is extremely time consuming, and can literally double the cost of the assessment.

3. It is virtually impossible to achieve high interrater consistency regarding the specific number of errors present in a piece of writing because raters do not share the same priorities (one attends closely to spelling, another to punctuation, and so on), and do not always agree (not even the most up-to-date English handbooks always agree) on what is correct or acceptable.

4. In order to achieve fairness with error counts, one must also count the number of words in each student's paper. Otherwise, a student who writes three pages, and has more opportunity to make errors, will tend to be penalized in comparison to the student who writes only a short paragraph and has little opportunity for error.

5. Error-count approaches tend to penalize the student who takes a risk. Suppose two students are writing in response to the same task, for example, and neither knows how to use quotation marks correctly—but one attempts it and the other doesn't. One student will have "errors" for trying something a bit beyond her/his control. The other student's paper will not show that error, but the level of attempt will be less.

6. Most important (practical considerations aside), there is no empirical evidence to support the theory that counting and marking errors on a student's paper will improve that student's writing.

In this assessment, therefore, Conventions were scored as a function of **readability**—that is to say, the relative ease with which the reader could get through the paper. At the 5.0 level, conventions actually enhance readability. The paper does not have to be flawless, but the writer does need to demonstrate a good grasp of writing conventions that helps make the paper extremely easy to read

and understand. It may help to think of it this way: a 5.0 paper (with respect to Conventions) is sufficiently polished (or very nearly so) to be ready for inclusion in a school anthology of student writing with very little additional editing needed.

At the 3.0 level, problems with conventions begin to be distracting, and impair readability somewhat. It is still relatively easy to decipher meaning, but an occasional sentence might require re-reading, or an occasional misspelled word might need to be sounded out before it can be. In general, though, the reader can move along at a fairly fast—if bumpy—pace. A 3.0 paper would require moderate editing and polishing before it could be considered ready for inclusion in a school anthology. At the 1.0 level, errors are so abundant and consistently distracting that the paper is truly difficult to read. The reader must pause frequently to puzzle over meaning or simply to decipher and decode, and some words or phrases may be hard to make out even after careful scrutiny. A 1.0 level paper would require extensive editing before it could be published in a school anthology of student writing.

### Some Important Reminders About Conventions Scores

There are some additional considerations which need to be taken into account when evaluating the Conventions scores:

1. Handwriting was NOT considered in scoring Conventions. That is, a paper with very poor handwriting might be difficult to read, but if the conventions were well handled (and this was often the case), the paper was not scored down.

2. Papers that were essentially correct, but showed only the most modest level of attempt (e.g., no quotation marks, no complex or compound sentences, no variety in end punctuation—periods only) generally received 4s. One could not fairly say that errors impaired readability; they did not. Yet it was the consensus of the group of raters that such a paper did not merit as high a score as the paper in which the writer attempted more difficult constructions and generally succeeded.

3. Papers that were flawless mechanically were not necessarily strong papers in other respects. It often happened that a paper which received very high scores on Conventions tended to be rather weak in Ideas and Content and in Voice. Similarly, papers that were very strong in Ideas and Content and in Voice were not necessarily strong in Conventions. It is important to be aware of such differences in interpreting the data. Typically, such differences will not be made clear in holistic scoring. And in fact, a mechanically flawless paper may have a strong advantage in a holistic system because it tends to create a positive first impression that may bias the reader's view about the quality of the paper as a whole. On the other hand, a mechanically flawed paper may negatively bias a reader in much the same way. One of the primary advantages in analytical scoring is its capacity to identify for us the positive-negative contrasts within each paper, reminding us that a writer who does one thing very well will not necessarily do everything well.

# Chapter 3:
# Substudy Comparing 1987 and 1989

As part of the 1989 assessment of writing skills, a substudy was conducted to determine whether any differences in scores from 1987 to 1989 might be attributable to differences in the way raters for the two years were scoring the papers. To address this issue the 1989 team scored a small sample of papers that had originally been scored by the 1987 team, and the scores were compared. There were virtually no differences in the two sets of scores, suggesting great consistency in scoring from 1987 to 1989. Results of the substudy are shown in Tables 3 and 4:

**Table 3**
**1989 Rating of Sample of 1987 Papers**

| | Ideas | Organization | Voice | Word Choice | Sentence Structure | Conventions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 3.08 | 2.92 | 3.18 | 3.19 | 3.26 | 3.12 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.6 |

**Table 4**
**1987 Rating of 1987 Papers**

| | Ideas | Organization | Voice | Word Choice | Sentence Structure | Conventions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 3.12 | 2.95 | 3.24 | 3.17 | 3.18 | 3.28 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.5 |

# Chapter 4:
# Factors Affecting Student Performance

Countless factors can affect a student's performance, and though we can only hypothesize about what factors may have been most important for this assessment, a brief review of potential influences may assist you in interpreting the data for an individual student—or for a school or the state as a whole.

1. The Prompts

   For some students, the prompt may have seemed too structured or may simply not have touched a responsive chord. For others, quite the opposite could have been true. In the absence of teacher-directed prewriting and peer response activities, it may be difficult for some students to demonstrate their best writing. Unfortunately, though, it is very difficult for formal assessments to incorporate such activities on a statewide basis because there is no means for ensuring consistency in the way that they are handled. Without such assurance of consistency from one classroom to another, some students would inevitably have an advantage if prewriting and peer review were incorporated.

2. Attitude

   Both the attitude of the teacher in the classroom and the attitude of the student have direct bearing on performance. If the attitude is notably positive and enthusiastic, that is often reflected in the quality of the writing, and the willingness to try something new. Teachers who fear that results will be used for teacher evaluation (which they will not) may feel unnecessarily anxious about the exercise, and their anxiety can, unfortunately, be transferred to student writers.

3. Understanding the Exercise

   Every effort was made to standardize test administration procedures and to provide clear instructions that would help students do their best (See Appendix A for a copy of the Student Directions). Nevertheless, there is always the chance that some students may have misunderstood the assignment, or may have had difficulty with it for some reason. To monitor the effect of the administration on student performance, teachers giving the assignment were asked to respond to a questionnaire. Of the 97 teachers who responded, 76 indicated all students had adequate time for the writing task. A total of 87 felt the student directions provided appropriate guidance. In addition, 86 felt the exercise was appropriate for eighth grade students. (More complete results appear in Appendix C.)

4. Curriculum and Instruction

   We must recognize at the outset that curriculum differs widely district to district, school to school, and even classroom to classroom. An instructor who spends a great deal of instructional

time on organization, for example, may be considerably less pleased with the statewide results than one who spends relatively little time and has, therefore, very different expectations about student performance. The teacher survey indicated that 85 of the 97 teachers who responded had received training in the teaching of writing as a process, which is the focus of the curriculum adopted by the State.

5. Test Anxiety

   For many students, test anxiety is so overwhelming that it may preclude top-level performance. Such intervention is particularly unfortunate in this case since the statewide writing assessment is not really a test in the usual sense at all. It is a diagnosis of performance intended to provide a data base for improving instruction. We have attempted in both introductory and followup materials to make this intent clear—yet we recognize that for some students, writing itself may seem a bit intimidating, and writing for an unknown audience may, for some, heighten that anxiety.

Certainly many other factors can influence performance as well. We ask you to keep these and other factors in mind as you interpret the results.

# Chapter 5:
# A Brief History of Writing Assessment in Oregon

The Oregon Assessment Program was initiated in 1973 to measure students' performance in the basic skills of reading, writing, and computing. The purpose of the program has been to establish a database for improving instruction and curriculum in these skills. Oregon began by testing reading, computing, and writing-related skills (e.g., identifying sentence fragments, using capitals correctly) measurable through objective, machine-scorable, multiple-choice tests. Later, a recommendation was made to assess writing directly through a writing sample: that is, an actual example of student writing that would be scored by a trained rater.

In 1978, the first statewide direct assessment of writing (i.e., via writing samples, not objective multiple-choice items) was conducted in Oregon. Students at grades 4, 7 and 11 were tested. A representative sample of schools throughout the state participated; they were selected on the basis of size, organizational structure and geographic region (metropolitan, east, west). The results were scored holistically. Holistic—or general impression scoring, as it is often called now—is essentially a rank ordering of papers from highest to lowest performance. In other words, raters who review the papers say, in effect, "Out of this group of papers, these are the best efforts, these the next best, these next, and these the least effective." In a holistic assessment, each paper receives one score based on how the rater feels the paper works as a whole. In ranking or scoring papers, the rater compares each student's paper with anchor papers or model papers (sometimes called range finders) selected for their representativeness. Since Oregon used a four-point scale with its holistic scoring, raters received model papers for each of the four score levels (a 4 paper, 3 paper, and so on), and assigned scores to students' test papers by matching them against the model papers. These model papers, like the test papers themselves, revealed a mix of strengths and weaknesses: strong vocabulary, but organizational structure, or strong ideas, but weak mechanics, and so on. These traits or qualities of writing were not addressed or scored individually, however. In holistic scoring, scores depend on the rater's overall impression of how the piece as a whole works. And thus, in interpreting the assigned scores, it's up to the writer (and instructor) to figure out what particular mix of strengths and weaknesses led raters to score a paper as they did. Many different kinds of papers might receive, say, a score of 3. This lack of definition was frustrating to many students and teachers. In 1982, a second statewide direct assessment of student writing was conducted. Participating schools were chosen according to the same random sampling methods, and students at grades 4, 7 and 11 were tested. Again, the papers were scored holistically.

### Analytical Scoring: The Need for More Diagnostic Information

Following the 1978 and 1982 writing assessments, many educators expressed a desire for more specific information. They wanted a scoring guide that would specify in advance the traits (ideas, organization, word choice, and so on) important to fine writing, and the strengths and weaknesses likely to be observable at each score level. If, for example, a paper were strong on ideas, but weak in sentence structure, that difference could not be reflected in a single holistic score; but it could easily

be reflected in analytical scoring where traits are rated individually. The desire for a comprehensive, diagnostic profile of students' performance statewide was an important consideration influencing Oregon's decision to conduct an analytical writing assessment—but it was not the only consideration. Analytical scoring offers instructional advantages. A comprehensive, well-defined scoring guide is in effect a value statement about writing. It is not a test at all in the usual sense of the word—though it can be used as a scoring rubric to support the assessment of writing skill. In addition to its application in the statewide assessment, a comprehensive analytical scoring guide can be used to

- make assessment results clear to various audiences.
- help students understand what qualities are important in good writing.
- help beginning writers establish an orderly, systematic plan for editing and revising their writing.
- help teachers design writing instruction based on the qualities they wish to see demonstrated.
- help parents, students and others understand how student writing is evaluated.
- provide consistency in the way teachers rate student writing.
- provide a vocabulary that educators, students, and parents can use in talking about writing and writing instruction.

Once the decision had been made to conduct an analytical assessment of writing in Oregon, it was still essential to identify a scoring guide. Numerous models were reviewed by a panel established by the Department of Education prior to the 1985 writing assessment. The panel determined that the scoring guide developed in 1984-85 by the Beaverton, Oregon School District was the most appropriate for use by the state. That guide was used to score papers for the 1985 and 1987 Oregon Statewide Writing Assessments.

Following the 1985 statewide analytical writing assessment, many teachers throughout Oregon began using the analytical scoring guide as a part of classroom instruction. Some districts—within Oregon and elsewhere—began using the guide, or their own version of it, to conduct their own analytical assessments. Over time, as a result of many excellent suggestions and comments by classroom teachers, the wording of the original guide was modified slightly, but these clarifications never changed the general content, spirit or philosophy of the original. (Special thanks are due the teachers of the Beaverton School District and Portland Public Schools, who contributed very extensively to development of the current version of the Analytical Scoring Guide now used by the State of Oregon.)

**The scoring guide.** The scoring guide used by Oregon incorporates six distinct traits: Ideas and Conventions; Organization; Voice; Word Choice; Sentence Fluency; and Conventions. Each of these traits is scored individually. The individual scores for separate traits (e.g., Ideas and Content, Voice) are never combined in any way. The guide is keyed to a nine-point scale in which scores range

at half-point intervals from a low of 1.0 to a high of 5.0. Each trait is defined at the 5.0 (strong), 3.0 (balance of strengths and weaknesses) and 1.0 (weak) score levels. Thus, keep in mind that raters do assign scores of 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.5, 4.0 and 4.5, as appropriate, even though these score points are not explicitly defined on the scoring guide. To define all nine score points in writing would make the guide very long and cumbersome, and likely create more confusion than clarity.

The definitions for each trait were developed by writing teachers at all grade levels (elementary, intermediate, high school) who began by defining the six traits within the scoring guide in general terms, and then refined those definitions based on the strengths and weaknesses they observed in hundreds of actual student papers. Every definition was field tested, refined and revised until the teachers who used it to rate students' writing agreed that the definition did, in fact, reflect what readers would actually see in students' writing, and what teachers of writing valued.

The scoring levels do not equate to grades. The five whole-point (e.g., 1.0, 2.0) levels of the scoring guide do NOT correspond in any way to grade levels A, B, C, D, and F. To view them in this fashion would lead to serious misinterpretation of the results, and would distort the spirit of the assessment. An analytical assessment, unlike some forms of writing assessment, is not judgmental in nature. It is diagnostic. Its purpose is to identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' writing at various levels. To assist your interpretation, consider that at the 3.0 level, strengths and weaknesses approximately balance. At the 3.5 level and above, strengths begin to outweigh weaknesses, and at the 5.0 level, strengths overwhelmingly predominate.

Conversely, at the 2.5 level and below, weaknesses begin to outweigh strengths, and at the 1.0 level, weaknesses predominate. Keep in mind too that a student's score on one trait may be very different from his/her scores on any other trait.

# Appendices

A: Student Directions

B: Guide to Revision

C: Summary of Responses from the Teacher Survey Form

D: 1989 Interpretive Panel Members

E: Writing Performance: 1985-1989

Your Name _____

## *OREGON STATEWIDE WRITING ASSESSMENT*

### STUDENT DIRECTIONS

The following directions tell you how to produce your writing sample for the Oregon Statewide Assessment in writing. Read them carefully, and ask your teacher if you have any questions.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Starting today, you will be participating in an activity called a writing assessment. The word "assessment" means that your writing will be looked at by specially trained teachers who will rate the strengths and weaknesses in each paper. They will consider these six traits or characteristics in scoring each student's paper:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ideas and Content | Word Choice | Organization |
| Sentence Structure | Voice | Conventions |

There is no "passing score" and there are no right or wrong answers.

You will do ALL your writing here in the classroom, but you are free to talk about the topic with friends or family if that helps you get ideas about your writing. Choose <u>one</u> of the two topics listed below to write on:

TOPIC 1: ***Think about a person who has influenced your life. It should be someone you know quite well. Tell how this person has influenced your life or made a difference.***

TOPIC 2: ***Everyone has an event in his or her life that is memorable for some reason. Think of something that happened to you that you will want to remember when you are old. Describe the event so the reader can understand why the memory is important to you.***

You may write your paper as a story, essay, letter, or any other form of PROSE that you choose, but NO POEMS, please.

Beginning today, and for the next two days after that, you will have time to

1. Do some prewriting on your own, if you wish.
2. Write a rough draft.
3. Revise that rough draft, using a Guide to Revision that your teacher will give you.
4. Recopy your final draft into a special booklet that your teacher will give you.

You will go through these steps at YOUR OWN PACE. You may finish a little faster than some students, and not quite as fast as some others. You will have UP TO THREE class periods to finish your paper. We'll explain each of these steps briefly here, but your teacher will also explain them to you as you go.

### STEP 1: PREWRITING

Your teacher will NOT lead the class in prewriting activities, even though this may be the way you <u>usually</u> begin writing in your class. This time, we'd like you to do any prewriting by yourself on a sheet your teacher will pass out.

You may spend as much time on prewriting as you wish, but do not spend so much time that you do not have a chance to begin your rough draft. Most students spend about 10 minutes prewriting, and then begin writing the rough draft.

## STEP 2: WRITING THE ROUGH DRAFT

You should begin writing the rough draft on the FIRST DAY of writing, as soon as you finish prewriting. Write your rough draft in pen or pencil on regular notebook paper. Write on EVERY OTHER LINE on just one side of the paper so you have plenty of room to revise.

Keep in mind that when you recopy your final draft in a day or two, it will need to fit into the writing booklet, which is THREE AND A HALF PAGES LONG.

Be sure to put your name in the upper right hand corner of EACH PAGE of your rough draft so that ALL pages can be returned to you later.

Most students spend about 45 minutes writing the rough draft.

## STEP 3: REVISING THE ROUGH DRAFT

When you feel ready, you may begin revising your rough draft. Most students will probably not begin revising until the SECOND WRITING DAY. When you feel you are ready to revise, ask your teacher to give you a Guide to Revision.

Read this guide carefully and use it as much as you can in revising your paper.

You may also use a dictionary or thesaurus as you are writing and revising. Do your revisions in pen or pencil—whichever you like better.

Most students need 30 to 45 minutes to do a good job of revising.

## STEP 4: RECOPYING AND PROOFREADING THE FINAL DRAFT

After you've done all the revising you think your paper needs, let your teacher know you are ready to copy your final draft into the writing booklet. PLEASE USE A PEN for this final copy to make it easy to read, and please WRITE ON EVERY LINE (not every OTHER line).

Most students need from 30 to 45 minutes to copy the final draft into the writing booklet.

Make your paper as NEAT as you can. However, you should know that your handwriting and neatness in general will NOT be part of your score.

Before you hand in your writing booklet (with the FINAL draft), you will need to fill in some information on the front (your name, your teacher's name, and so forth). Your teacher will give you directions for doing this; this is one activity all students in your class will do TOGETHER.

Remember that ONLY YOUR FINAL DRAFT will be scored. The prewriting and rough draft that you do will not be looked at in scoring your paper. Your scores on this writing sample will be returned to you before the end of the year.

The teachers who score papers enjoy reading students' writing and are very interested in what you have to say. Thank you for sharing a sample of your writing with us.

Appendix B

## GUIDE TO REVISION

For each comment you agree with, put an X in the blank. Use this list as a guide to revise your paper on the six traits on which it will be scored.

### IDEAS AND CONTENT

[ ] My paper has a clear purpose or makes a point.
[ ] I use clear, relevant details and examples to help the reader understand my message.
[ ] I stick to the main idea (or ideas) and leave out details that do not matter.
[ ] I have thought about my topic carefully and feel as if I know what I'm talking about.

### ORGANIZATION

[ ] The way I've started my paper is effective; it would make the reader want to keep reading.
[ ] I've told things in an order that makes sense and makes it easy to follow what I'm saying.
[ ] The details in my paper go together or lead up to some bigger idea, main point, or conclusion.
[ ] My paper ends well; it doesn't just stop suddenly, but it doesn't drag on too long either.

### VOICE

[ ] I've written in a way that shows how I really think and feel about this topic.
[ ] I like what I've written; it's fun to read.
[ ] I've put something of myself into this paper and it sounds like me—not like someone else.
[ ] I've given some thought to what the reader will think and feel when reading this.

### WORD CHOICE

[ ] It's easy to picture what I'm talking about; the words paint a picture in the reader's mind.
[ ] I wasn't satisfied with words or phrases I've heard many times before; I have tried to find my own way to say things.
[ ] My writing sounds natural; it sounds like me.
[ ] Sometimes I've tried saying something in a new or different way; I've had fun with the language.

### SENTENCES

[ ] My sentences make sense; the meaning of each one is clear, and there are no words left out.
[ ] My sentences have variety; some are longer than others, and they do not all begin the same way.
[ ] I've read my paper over and like the way it sounds; it's smooth and easy to read.

### CONVENTIONS

[ ] I've proofread my paper and corrected any errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar.
[ ] My paragraphs begin in the right spots.
[ ] I've used capital letters to begin sentences and on all proper nouns (names of persons, places or things).
[ ] Correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, punctuation and paragraphing make my paper EASY to read.

PPD448sa
2/25/88

## Appendix C

Oregon Department of Education
700 Pringle Parkway, S.E.
Salem, OR 97310-0290

Curriculum and School Improvement
Assessment and Evaluation

TEACHER SURVEY
1989 OREGON STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT
WRITING
n = 97

1. How adequate was the amount of time allowed for students to complete the test?

   16 Very adequate
   60 Adequate
   21 Inadequate

2. Did you encounter any problems in deciding whether to exclude any students?

   16 Yes
   79 No

3. To what extent did the directions given to students provide appropriate guidance in responding to the topic?

   3 Too much guidance
   84 Appropriate amount of guidance
   9 Too little guidance

4. How appropriate was the writing topic in eliciting representative samples of student writing?

   20 Very appropriate
   66 Appropriate
   8 Inappropriate
   1 Unsure

5. To what extent have your students had experience in writing on topics similar to the oneused in the state test?

   7 Much experience
   66 Some experience
   22 Little experience

6a. Does your school or district normally administer a test of students' writing skills, involving production of a writing sample and use of standardized scoring procedures?

21 Yes
70 No
1 Unsure

6b. If yes, which scoring procedure is used?

14 Holistic
1 Primary Trait
6 Analytical Trait
1 Other

7. Have you had any courses or workshops on "Writing as a Process"?

56 Yes
29 No
6 Unsure

8. Have you ever participated in a workshop on the analytical scoring procedure used by the state?

19 Yes
69 No

## Appendix D

## 1989 Interpretive Panel Members

Carol Meyer, Beaverton School District
Evelyn Brzezinski, Portland Public Schools
Thelda Bevens, Multnomah Education Service District
Barbara Wolfe, Oregon Department of Education
Vicki Spandel, Independent Contractor
Gay Masters, Salem-Keizer School District
Lana Stanley, Hermiston School District
Marilyn Olson, Lane Education Service District
Pat Kern, Bend Administrative School District
Phil Griswold, Parkrose School District

## Appendix E

## Writing Performance: 1985-1989

| Writing Skill Area | Year | Scored | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 3.0 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 5.0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ideas/Content | 1985 | 1.8 | 0.5 | 1.9 | 11.1 | 19.5 | 38.8 | 16.7 | 7.4 | 1.5 | 0.5 |
| | 1987 | 1.3 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 3.8 | 12.6 | 42.2 | 25.7 | 11.5 | 1.7 | 0.5 |
| | 1989 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 1.5 | 8.3 | 18.3 | 33.2 | 23.1 | 11.3 | 2.3 | 1.0 |
| Organization | 1985 | 1.8 | 0.6 | 3.3 | 20.5 | 24.3 | 28.8 | 13.3 | 5.6 | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| | 1987 | 1.3 | 0.2 | 1.1 | 7.2 | 21.1 | 38.5 | 20.7 | 8.0 | 1.5 | 0.4 |
| | 1989 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 2.4 | 10.9 | 22.3 | 35.8 | 17.6 | 7.6 | 1.6 | 0.6 |
| Voice | 1985 | 1.8 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 3.0 | 12.1 | 43.9 | 22.9 | 12.1 | 2.5 | 0.9 |
| | 1987 | 1.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 1.8 | 7.7 | 43.2 | 29.7 | 13.0 | 2.3 | 0.7 |
| | 1989 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.8 | 5.4 | 14.4 | 34.6 | 25.3 | 13.7 | 3.1 | 1.7 |
| Word Choice | 1985 | 1.8 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 2.7 | 13.1 | 62.0 | 13.9 | 4.5 | 1.2 | 0.3 |
| | 1987 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 1.1 | 7.1 | 62.2 | 19.3 | 7.2 | 1.4 | 0.3 |
| | 1989 | 0.7 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 2.2 | 10.6 | 57.0 | 19.4 | 7.0 | 1.8 | 0.7 |
| Sentence Structure | 1985 | 1.8 | 0.2 | 1.2 | 7.0 | 15.3 | 41.8 | 19.8 | 10.2 | 2.2 | 0.6 |
| | 1987 | 1.3 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 3.4 | 11.9 | 42.5 | 26.9 | 11.1 | 2.0 | 0.3 |
| | 1989 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.9 | 4.2 | 14.2 | 36.6 | 26.6 | 12.6 | 3.0 | 0.8 |
| Conventions | 1985 | 1.8 | 0.5 | 2.1 | 10.2 | 16.7 | 31.7 | 19.5 | 12.5 | 3.4 | 1.4 |
| | 1987 | 1.3 | 0.3 | 1.3 | 5.8 | 14.4 | 27.0 | 27.3 | 18.8 | 3.1 | 0.6 |
| | 1989 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 2.0 | 6.8 | 16.3 | 27.7 | 23.2 | 17.5 | 4.1 | 1.0 |

*Percentage of Scores Within Each Score Level*


71